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The Coat of Arms of Muggleton College

Gules, on the waves of the sea or, in a bowl argent, debruised by a bend sinister azure, the wise men of Gotham proper, vested sable, for Muggleton.

A chief party per pale, azure, charged in the dexter with a van of progress purpure, and in the sinister with the tree of knowledge, fructed or.

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TARVER, JOHN CHARLES.

MUGGLETON COLLEGE

Its Rise and Fall

WESTMINSTER
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MUGGLETON COLLEGE

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PART I

THE NEW SCHOOL AT MUGGLETON

Muggleton is not a mushroom town like Chicago and Middlesborough: it can boast of a history;—of a visit from Queen Elizabeth; of a magnificently illuminated charter with a portrait of Charles the Second in the corner; of having been stormed by Cromwell, frightened by the Pretender, rabbled in the thirties, harried by the Salvation Army in the eighties; it preserves a ducking-stool and scold's bridle in the council-chamber of the town hall; fragments of Roman pottery, found when digging the out-fall of the new sewer, in its museum. The parish church

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was built by a Crusader in expiation of some act of doubtful morality; the southernmost arch of the town bridge dates from Edward the First; the neighbouring common is traversed by a mound and ditch of unknown antiquity. Altogether it is a proud thing to be a native of Muggleton, and its inhabitants are not unduly lifted up.

Within the last fifty years Muggleton has considerably expanded. Several important industries have established themselves there: all forms of engineering, chemical works, paper-mills, cement works, manure works; for Muggleton has the good fortune to stand on a navigable river near a coal-field. The expansion of Muggleton has not conducted itself in accordance with artistic prejudices as to the nature of what is beautiful. Around the centre formed by the market-place, town hall, parish church, parish stocks, and police court, the ancient streets have extended them-

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selves into unlovely miles of artisans' houses, occupying what used to be the suburban beauties of Muggleton—a cause of endless wailing to the spinster daughters of past Muggletonian Mayors. Butchers' shops, dried-fish shops, undertakers' establishments, share with public-houses the best frontages of Muggleton; here and there churches and chapels break the monotonous lines of two-storied brick houses abutting on unfinished pavements; further in the outskirts iron churches are found—the humble chrysalis skins from which splendid stone fabrics are to burst.

Socially, Muggleton is singularly of one character throughout; its aristocracy have withdrawn into the country houses formerly occupied by historic county families; there is no butcher in Muggleton, who dare not hope some day to be mayor. To him who dares greatly nothing is closed. Muggleton prides itself on its enlightenment—indeed, on its intellectuality. When the Education

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Act was passed, no town set to work to carry it into effect so willingly as Muggleton; its first school board boasted that no two members were of the same religious denomination. The sewage of Muggleton is the despairing ideal of all sanitary authorities; its water-supply gives the standard of purity to public analysts; the corporation gas works are a triumph of organisation. People die at Muggleton in smaller numbers than in any manufacturing town of the same size, and are then buried in a model cemetery, whose avenues of Irish yew-trees were presented by a candidate for the representation of the borough.

Civic patriotism, too, is a highly thriving virtue in Muggleton; each successive wave of prosperity has left some public improvement as an indication of its high-water mark. After one, was built the new town hall; another left an organ of portentous dimensions in the parish church; yet another founded a free library, followed

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by an art gallery, a museum, public park, and model slaughter-houses. It is the boast of Muggleton that all the luxuries of the rich are within reach of its poorest inhabitants. Of the charities of Muggleton who can adequately tell? —of its soup-kitchens, penny dinners, model lodging-houses, savings banks? Were there lions in Muggleton, they would undoubtedly lie down with its lambs; were there cockatrices, their holes would be the playgrounds of the children of the poor; the Rector himself walks arm in arm with Baptist ministers, and the Roman Catholic priest sits on the same committee for the distribution of blankets with the Rector's wife.

When University Extension lectures were first started, what more energetic centre than Muggleton? More young ladies wrote answers to questions in Muggleton than in any other town in the United Kingdom; the consumption of pencils and note-books threatened to develop a new

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industry; and the first extension lecturer who married the daughter of a mayor led to the altar the daughter of a mayor of Muggleton. Like the inhabitants of Athens, the Muggletonians are for ever inquiring after some new thing; mesmerism, hypnotism, homœopathy, spiritualism, Professor Galvaine, esoteric Buddhism, spelling-bees, vegetarianism, anagrams, cryptograms, all have run their course at Muggleton; in no community of human beings is the *Review of Reviews* more frequently studied. Salvation Army, Church Army, faith-healing, Sequah, have each had their turn in this favoured town.

In Muggleton all public institutions are conducted on sound business principles; even the town hall pays the corporation four per cent. The board schools earn such grants as to be self-supporting; the sewage system brings in a handsome revenue; the very prisoners in the town gaol earn their keep, and the fire-brigade is supported by the money won at public

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competitions. Should there ever be an exhibition of mayors, the prize will undoubtedly fall to the Mayor of Muggleton, who will therewith pay the expenses of his mayoralty and of a portrait of himself to be presented to the corporation.

Muggletonians declare that the secret of all their success lies in never anticipating a want, in waiting till the want declares itself; recently the want that declared itself was that of a boys' public school other than the board schools.

Like most great enterprises, this one sprang from a small beginning. Mr. Parkinson of West Grove was enjoying a pipe and after-supper glass of whisky with Mr. Beccles of High Field, while Mrs. Parkinson with Mrs. Beccles was putting the children to bed upstairs. Conversation fell upon the education of their respective boys; both had large families, with capacity for prospective increase. Mrs. Beccles did not like the idea of the board schools for the children,

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Mrs. Parkinson was of the same mind; neither Parkinson nor Beccles understood why, but saw that submission was inevitable. The question of cost was discussed, as also the detailed demands of Mrs. Beccles and Mrs. Parkinson; the former would not send her sons to a school unprovided with a playground, the latter stipulated for airy class-rooms. To send the boys quite away from home appeared both harrowing to parental feeling and of doubtful advantage. Mrs. Parkinson, returning from the upper regions, was persuaded that boys in boarding schools were forced to sleep in damp sheets; Mrs. Beccles knew for a fact that their clothes were never mended. Bullying was mentioned, and the horrors of the dormitory.

A review of the proletariate of the neighbourhood disclosed the fact that there were some fifty boys waiting to be educated, whose social qualifications were satisfactory both to Mrs. Parkinson and

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Mrs. Beccles. An additional glass of whisky settled the matter; it was resolved to hold an informal meeting in Mrs. Parkinson's drawing-room, who withdrew to review the furniture, and consider the question of putting down a drugget. Mrs. Beccles wrote invitations; the men finished their pipes; they squeezed one another's hands at parting; hopes ran high.

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II

THE following Thursday brought some twenty male and female citizens of Muggleton together in Mrs. Parkinson's drawing-room, where a fire had been lighted for the occasion, thus disturbing the routine of the household, accustomed to see that fire lighted on Friday only. The equanimity of Mrs. Parkinson's housemaid had been trifled with in deference to an opinion commonly held in Muggleton to the effect that Friday is not a good day on which to start an enterprise. In an age of philosophic doubt, who knows where the path of safety may lie? Nor is it practically wise to fly in the teeth of the prejudices of wealthier brethren when you want their help. Such were the opinions of the

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rector, the Rev. E. B. Rowlandson, who presided on this occasion, and therefore Mrs. Parkinson gave way. Jane gave notice.

Mrs. Beccles had no sooner entered the room than she fastened upon the Rector; a new public-house was threatened in W. T. Stead Street; could the calamity be averted? Should she visit severally each of the borough magistrates? The Rector thought she might influence them. But on a previous occasion members of the bench had broken their most solemn promises. 'Public men have so little conscience.' 'Is it not rather that they have to consider so many opposing claims?' the Rector ventured to remark.

'But a promise, Mr. Rowlandson!—a promise—made to a lady!' said Mrs. Beccles. Meanwhile the Rector was voted into the chair; and, pledging himself to interview the Mayor, parted from the fair advocate of temperance.

The company settled themselves in their

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seats. A momentary disturbance caused by the collapse of an ex-mayoress, who had imprudently deposited herself on a light inlaid rosewood chair, gave the Rector time to consider his introductory remarks.

He felt that this was an occasion of such a nature as to make it highly honourable to be the occupant of the chair; indeed he did not know why that honour had been conferred upon him, unless it were that he had eleven sons, all very much in need of education (applause)—a larger number, he believed, than even Mr. Puddipher had been blessed with; here there was an interruption from Mrs. Puddipher to the effect that she had buried seven. 'Was that so? a family of sixteen, if all had lived—how very remarkable!' A stout old gentleman in the corner was now understood to be saying something. 'Would Mr. Pilling kindly give the whole company the benefit of his remarks?' Mr. Pilling was only 'a-saying as he 'd a know'd fower families

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of sixteen in his time and one of twenty; but Lord! that was before the days of railways!' 'And doubtless they were all duly provided for?' said the Rector. Mr. Pilling didn't know rightly as how they worn't, leastways not to want the necessaries of life nohow, but——'I think perhaps we had better proceed with our business,' interrupted the chairman, and the aged Pilling continued his remarks in an audible whisper for the benefit of his immediate neighbour, an eager little woman carrying a plump black leather bag.

The chairman proceeded to enlarge upon the mighty promise of that day; he was called upon to lay before them a scheme, or rather, perhaps, to ascertain their wishes on the subject of a scheme, for establishing a high-class school for boys in Muggleton; such a school as should make it unnecessary for the wealthiest inhabitant of Muggleton to send his boys away from home, and which would place the best education in England within the reach of the poorest.

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'I understood,' said Mrs. Parkinson, 'that there was to be no mixture of classes.'

'Oh, no, of course not; but they would hardly be doing their duty to their fellow-townsmen did they not build a ladder for them, whereby a few favoured individuals marked by God and their ability for such posts as those of Lord High Chancellor and Prime Minister might be enabled to climb from the gutters of Muggleton, through the board schools, into the new public schools, and thence, he fondly hoped, to one of our great universities.'

After this burst of eloquence had been vigorously applauded, especially by Mrs. Beccles, Mr. Puddipher wished to ask the chairman whether Cambridge College or Oxford College was the greater; he suggested that from the beginning they should strive after definiteness of aim. He knew nothing about either of these institutions himself, but thought that as practical men of business they should

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abstain from wasting their energies; he understood that there were examinations; and what he said was, let them ascertain which of these two colleges was the better, and then work for its examinations from the beginning. These sentiments were favourably received; but the chairman reminded the company that such a question was a matter of detail, which might be entrusted to their headmaster after the school was opened; at present they had not even decided whether there was to be a school.

'Oh, I thought we were all agreed upon that,' said Mrs. Beccles, smiling at Mrs. Parkinson, who stared unresponsive; the mixture of classes was still rankling in her mind.

At this moment the member's wife, who had been invited to grace the proceedings, wished to be allowed to say that she felt the strongest sympathy with the object of the meeting; she could not hold out a hope of personally supporting the school

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by sending any of her boys to it, for two of her sons were already at Eton, and the third was so very delicate that she despaired of ever sending him to school at all; and even if he did go, the question of climate would of course have to outweigh every other consideration; still, Mr. de Clavering had wished her to say how much he regretted not being able to be with them on such an interesting occasion, and that he hoped, when their financial constitution was settled, they would allow him the honour of placing £500 to the credit of the new school.

So generous a speech was received with the welcome it deserved. Mrs. Parkinson's china rattled on the shelves, and a cloud of dust rose from the carpet.

The mention of money at once brought matters to a head; it was rapidly voted that a school should be founded, and almost as rapidly a committee was elected from those gentlemen in the room to consider its financial basis, with power to

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add to their number. Mr. Parkinson, Mr. Puddipher, Mr. Podbury, Mr. Beccles, and the Rector were the first names. It was suggested that the Mayor should be invited to join the committee, and Mr. de Clavering; on the behalf of the latter his wife gracefully declined the honour; she feared he could not hope to attend any more meetings, 'his engagements in the House, you know,' and Mrs. de Clavering smiled upon the assembled matrons in confident expectation of sympathy.

'It 's all very well,' said Mrs. Parkinson, after the departure of the company, 'but if Rowlandson is going to get his way about foisting Dick, Tom, and Harry into our school, it will be no place for our boys, P., and we shall be no better off than before.'

P. did his best to soothe her; there would be plenty of time to put a matter like that straight; it never had been the way in Muggleton to let the Rector carry all before him, and never would be.

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Handsome of de Clavering, though, wasn't it?

'I hate that woman, with her patronising airs,' replied Mrs. Parkinson. 'Why, my mother used to say she well remembered the time when Mrs. de Clavering's father kept an oyster-stall at the back of the butter-market.'

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III

WITHIN a month's time the committee had settled on some names to be added to their number, canvassed well-to-do Muggleton, established the fact that the want existed, and assembled to fix the financial basis of the new school. The matter had already been privately discussed over unofficial glasses of whisky in all the villa residences of the town. Even the site of the buildings had been fixed upon—a vacant field adjacent to the continuation of one of the main streets known as Timmins' meadows, which the representatives of Timmins, recently deceased, were understood to be anxious to sell.

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While it had been clear to everybody that the school was wanted, the method by which the requisite funds were to be raised was not equally clear. An attempt to invite donations had at once been met by the sound Muggletonian proposition, that those who wanted should pay; to give money to a hospital or soup-kitchen, even to a place of worship, or fund for the multiplication of curates, was felt to be within the sphere of reasonable benevolence; but men who were already paying heavily to support education through the school rates could not fairly be expected to give further to that cause. Discouragement set in.

At this period Mrs. Beccles happened to mention in private conversation the Girls' Public Day School Company; her sister had shares in it, and had been paid five per cent. Mr Beccles deferentially propounded the idea to the Rector, asked for information; could this be so? Of course it was so; the fact was well known; the

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future of the education of English women had been settled on the day when the Girls' Public Day School Company paid their first dividend; it had been demonstrated that the highest education could be commercially a success; a school was an enterprise in which no capitalist need hesitate to invest; he would not earn speculative interest, but a safe and comfortable dividend. Mr. Beccles departed, feeling himself to be of some importance. Mrs. Beccles wrote to her sister, asked for detailed information, received by return of post a communication from her brother-in-law. Many schools had been founded as commercial undertakings—Blackheath College, Clifton College, Malvern College, Brighton College, Cheltenham College, Dover College, etc.; the limited liability company was a most convenient form of association for the purposes of education; the directors became the governors of the school, the headmaster the paid manager of the company, the assistant

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masters its clerks. A secretary and charwoman were common to both. Nothing could be more complete. The shareholders being for the most part parents, there could be no danger of postponing the interests of education to an inordinate greed for dividend. Mrs. Beccles promulgated her information; the idea was received with favour; it was in accordance with the Muggletonian axiom, that public institutions should pay their way. At the first meeting there was little to be done except to appoint the directors for the new company, and apportion the task of placing shares; each person present undertook to interview so many heads of families.

Mr. Parkinson suggested that the work of placing would be facilitated were some definite idea given as to the character of the school. He had found in private conversation that there was a strong feeling in Muggleton against one of those expensive society schools; the highest possible

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education was what they wanted in their town, but no extravagance; it would not do for the lads of Muggleton to get high ideas and be rendered unfit for a commercial career. Mrs. de Clavering had mentioned on a previous occasion a school called Eton; her boys attended it; he had inquired about this school, and ascertained that it was somewhere near London, and that it cost £300 a year to keep a boy there; that was not the kind of school to suit them. He proposed that the shares of the new company should be £5 shares, and the fees should be £5 a term; they would want at least £6000 to buy their site and build sufficient class-rooms to make a start with; it was well not to spend too much at first on building, and a margin would be necessary; the company's capital should be £10,000.

These figures were accepted as a starting-point. It was decided not to found a second Eton. Mr. Podbury did not be-

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lieve the money could be raised; the shares would not be readily transferable; in these times people were loth to lock up their money; he had a number of nephews partly dependent on him, and in their interests would gladly take up twenty shares, but did not look upon this as of the nature of an investment. Mr. Puddipher wished to know why not? pointed out that there were private-school masters who made vast fortunes; mentioned his wife's first cousin's husband's brother, who owned a small school at Scarborough, kept a yacht, rented a moor in Scotland. They did not hope to do that kind of thing; but it was clear that schoolmastering could be made to pay, else there would be no schoolmasters; and if so, why not by themselves as well as by private individuals?

A discussion followed as to the class of persons to be approached. The Rector was of opinion that they should place their shares over as wide an area as possible;

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the more shareholders the more boys; they might even hold out the inducement of reduced fees for shareholders. This suggestion seemed practical, and was adopted.

Mr. Puddipher thought it would be well to secure the services of some men of local influence upon the Board of Directors; such, for instance, as the Archdeacon and Sir John Smith. Mr. Beccles was afraid they might make their board too one-sided; it would be well to avoid politics and the appearance of sectarianism. Eventually the names of five local celebrities were added to the list of prospective directors; Sir John Smith, an ex-mayor, was to be bribed, if need be, with the hope of being elected chairman. The Rector undertook to approach the Archdeacon.

What should they say if they were asked what the school would provide? All were agreed upon a playground; Mr. Podbury suggested a swimming-bath; Mr.

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Puddipher a gymnasium; in the opinion of Mr. Parkinson they could not do without a workshop; Mr. Podbury added a fitting-shop and small forge, and dwelt on the importance of glass-blowing; Mr. Beccles hoped there would be a bicycle track—it was dangerous for boys to be riding bicycles on the public roads. Mr. Parkinson thought a covered playground for wet weather indispensable; this could also serve the purposes of a drill-shed. Mr. Podbury understood that some high-class schools had rifle-corps. It would not do for them to be behind any establishment in the country: could not arrangements be made for a firing-range? Mr. Beccles thought there should also be instruction in the use of life-saving apparatus. The Rector proposed an ambulance-class and fire-brigade.

Eventually a list was made of these various suggestions, and each member of the preliminary committee was provided with a copy.

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All felt that the dividends were an important feature in the scheme; but it was magnanimously agreed that it would be well to limit them to five per cent. After all, they were not engaged primarily on a commercial enterprise; their first aims were educational. Mr. Podbury objected; they had accepted the principle of paying a dividend; for his own part, he did not see paying for the education of other people's children, and would not like to think that others were doing the same for him. The Rector agreed, could not speak sufficiently strongly as to the importance of the dividend, also of avoiding any appearance of social exclusiveness; they could only fill their school by drawing from parents of all classes, who were rich enough to pay the fees. On one point he was open to conviction, but could not refrain from expressing his opinion that the suggested rate of fees was a little too high. Take his own case: he had eleven sons who might all be at school together—

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that would be £165 a year to pay for education; he did not think they would find many parents in the town who were prepared to pay at that rate. It was decided that the £5 fee was merely a provisional arrangement.

As the company broke up, the Rector whispered to Mr. Parkinson that he thought Podbury might have put down a thousand.

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IV

A FEW weeks later the Board of Directors was complete. In addition to the previous committee, there were Mr. Newsome, an active tradesman from the Midlands, who had found his way to the head of a large corn-dealing business, and was very much the public man of Muggleton; Mr. Finch, a wholesale chemist, supposed to be literary; Dr. Hanley, highly respected—his presence on the board was sure to give confidence in the sanitary arrangements of the building; Mr. Warner, an energetic manufacturer of wire rope, and Mr. Sussum, a former butcher, ascending to the mayoralty by the ladder of extensive jerry buildings. The last two were the Rector's appoint-

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ments; Mr. Warner was his churchwarden, Mr. Sussum a parishioner whom he had great hopes of converting from the errors of particular baptistry.

The Rector had approached, and in due form opened his batteries upon, the Archdeacon—unsuccessfully. He was at first disappointed, then defiant. The Archdeacon had wished to know whether this school was to be conducted on church lines; was the church catechism to be included in the course of instruction? The Rector replied that at Muggleton in its present unregenerate state compulsory catechism would excite general hostility; he would, however, undertake that the council would not object to an optional course of catechism. The Archdeacon thought that he could hardly support a procedure which seemed to him half-hearted on such an important subject; reminded the Rector of his own position. The latter began to reason of Tory prejudices, advocated the policy of stooping to conquer, eventually

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the church must win all along the line—it was only a question of time; he looked upon the new school as an important lever in the way of removing Nonconformist prejudice from the mind of well-to-do Muggleton; it was self-evident that the headmaster would be a member of the Church of England, if not actually in orders; the leaven would spread insensibly.

When it had spread, the Archdeacon signified his willingness to be on the Board of Directors; but till then he could only wish them all success. Meanwhile, how was the Rector getting on with his scheme for teaching Greek and Latin to grocers' assistants in the evenings, by way of qualifying them to take holy orders?

Mr. Puddipher, who had been told off to entertain Sir John Smith, with whom he had formerly been in partnership, had a slightly better story to tell. Sir John Smith had so much public business to attend to, that he had been obliged to

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make it a rule to undertake no responsibility in concerns in which he was not personally interested, as for instance the workhouse and the lunatic asylum, which he assisted to manage as a member of the Board of Guardians. He should be glad to take a few shares in the school by way of assisting a public undertaking with which he had some sympathy; indeed he might, if other circumstances proved favourable, avail himself of the school for his two younger sons; but of course much would depend upon how things turned out. He then asked Mr. Puddipher if he had observed that old MacHinnery had died worth a million, and so forth.

Mr. Puddipher returned to report that Sir John Smith had declined to become a director, but had signified his willingness to take a few shares, and had talked of sending his younger sons to the school. This was felt to be not so bad after all; and it was confidently reported on

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the following day in Muggleton that Sir John Smith had invested a thousand pounds in the new school, and was going to withdraw his eldest boys from Winchester as soon as the new buildings were ready for use.

The buildings soon occupied the attention of the Board of Directors, for seven thousand pounds had been raised with unexpected celerity. Mr. Sussum, as soon as his name had been placed on the board, had interviewed Mr. de Clavering, who had many acres of land suitable for building purposes in the vicinity of the proposed site. In consequence, Mr. de Clavering's five hundred pounds was multiplied by four; improvement to house property became an important item in the inducements held out to possible shareholders. Among the missionaries of the highest possible education, none were more active or more successful than the Rector and his churchwarden Mr. Warner. There was not a

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house with aspirations after gentility and respectability which they did not visit, and in which they did not place two shares per male child. The Rector was particularly successful, owing to his professional position as the adviser of all Muggletonian widows well left; he did not even spare those in reduced circumstances. Five per cent. and the highest possible education—what more could a prudent, child-loving widow ask for? Mr. Warner won his victories over another class: over a large number of Muggletonians, who saw an opportunity of cheaply earning a reputation for public spirit; over a few who wished Muggleton to have everything of the best, had seen the Eton and Harrow match and University boat-races mentioned in the newspapers, had even been moved to bet upon the results of the same.

Much had to be done in the way of soothing the apprehensions of timid mothers and anxious fathers. The former, on the mention of a playground, lost

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themselves in bewildered imaginings of broken limbs, contused heads, fractured spines, internal and appallingly invisible injuries. The hardness of cricket balls was much dwelt on, the brutality of football players and their indulgence in ferocious animal instincts, as also the prodigious heights of gymnastic apparatus. The male parent was wont rather to deprecate waste of time—an encouragement, indeed an artificial creation, of tastes which, well enough in a boy, would prove fatal to the prosperity of the fully developed man. Mr. Podbury himself, with careful avuncular eye upon the prospective well-being of his fatherless nephews, was felt to be unsound on the subject of the playground. Why should the boys not play at tipcat and marbles on the green? There was air, there was exercise, there was skill, and no one had ever seen a lad of mature years beguiled into making these amusements the interests of his life, as was the case

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with football, cricket, and the like. The Rector nearly wore out all that is left of the phrase *Mens sana in corpore sano* in combating the Podbury heresy.

It was further found that the list of advantages offered by the school was lamentably deficient. One man would not take shares unless there was a giant's stride, another unless summing was to be taught from the top as well as from the bottom; all were urgent in their demands for geography and political history, for the study of Magna Charta, the bulwark of our liberties. Some thought the boys ought to have gardens; others that they should learn to draw and dance; much importance was attached to the practical knowledge of chemistry and shorthand. It seemed further to be generally felt that nothing should be compulsory, that boys ought to attend school or not as their parents pleased, and that the latter should pay fees in proportion to their estimate of the value of the instruction.

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On the question of corporal punishment there was much division of opinion, ranging from Mrs. Beccles, who vowed that no strange man should lay his finger in the way of correction upon one of her poor lambs, to Mr. Podbury, who held that a thorough good hiding once a week would do his nephews a world of good; and what was a headmaster paid for, if he did not relieve the parents of the necessity of chastising their own children?

On the whole Muggleton responded well to the appeal that was made to its patriotism and its self-interest. The lowest possible contract was soon accepted for the new buildings, which were ornamented with a tower and a clock, sanitated by Mr. Jennings and Mr. Moule, ventilated on a new principle, and so arranged, that at any moment the headmaster could see all that was going on in all the class-rooms at once. The next question was the appointment of a headmaster.

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V

On one point the directors of the Muggleton Boys Public Day School Company, Limited, were invariably unanimous, viz., that the future of the school would depend upon the character of the headmaster; they were equally agreed upon the necessity of giving this official a free hand, even to the extent of allowing him to appoint his own assistant masters, school porter, charwoman, and ground man; their province would be simply to find money, his to ask for and spend it. Naturally the qualifications of the personage upon whom such vast responsibilities were to be devolved largely occupied the mind of Muggleton.

Should he be married or single? Public

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opinion decidedly inclined to the former; it simplified the question of visiting. And yet—Mrs. Beccles, contemplating the expanding charms of her eldest daughter, felt that something might be said for a bachelor. You need be on no ceremony with him; he could be asked to come round and have supper in a quiet way—so much more really friendly: whereas a married man would require to be dined; and his wife might be less pleasant than himself.

Mr. Warner spent much time in endeavouring to discover for what reasons the headmasters of existing schools had been selected. He wrote to the governing body of Eton College for information, and received no answer; to the Education Department at Whitehall, to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The Education Department referred him to an Act of Parliament, the letters to the universities were returned through the Dead Letter Office.

At this time his eye happened to fall

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on a paragraph headed 'Social' in the local paper, in which it was stated that Miss Ethel Barlow had recently passed the examination of the College of Preceptors with distinction. The College of Preceptors seemed to him likely to furnish precisely the information that he required. Taught by previous experience, he referred to *Whitaker's Almanack* for its address, and discovered that 'Members of the College after passing certain examinations are granted diplomas of F.C.P., L.C.P., and A.C.P., and are authorised to wear gowns and hoods:—F.C.P. silk with violet edging and two bands; L.C.P. one band only; A.C.P. of stuff without a band.' In spite of these temptations, he could not discover any head- or assistant-master in Whitaker's list of schools who had achieved the distinction of F.C.P., L.C.P., or even A.C.P. Pursuing his researches in Whitaker, he learned that the United Kingdom boasts fifty-four great public schools:

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that Epsom and Eton Colleges are kindred institutions with Mr. Almond's school at Loretto, Edinburgh; that the Grammar Schools at Bristol and Bradford are great public schools, but the same institutions at Hull and Newcastle-upon-Tyne are not; while the King's School at Canterbury enjoys the same superiority over St. Peter's School at York, as Winchester College over Wem Grammar School.

Bewildered with colleges and schools, academies and institutes, the conscientious churchwarden propounded questions to the curate: what did 'Reverend' before a schoolmaster's name imply? And M.A. after it? He of course knew its meaning in the case of the clergy. He had observed that all assistant masters styled themselves M.A. or B.A.; all headmasters M.A. or D.D.; a very few assistant masters prefixed 'Rev.' to their names; but nearly all headmasters were thus adorned. Was he right in assuming that the title of 'Reverend' was given to all

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headmasters, as that of Venerable to archdeacons? If so, why were a very small minority defrauded of this honour? M.A. he knew signified Master of Arts, and it seemed to him only right that a teacher should be a master of all arts, but by what steps was the qualification earned? On all these points he wished to have accurate information with a view to drawing up the form of advertisement for candidates for the post of headmaster in the new Muggleton school.

The curate replied that it was not customary to place at the head of educational establishments men who had not taken holy orders; indeed in some cases there were statutes expressly forbidding the appointment of any but ordained clergymen of the Church of England. For his own part he should profoundly distrust the moral teaching of any school whose headmaster was a layman—and what was education without morality?

As to the degree of M.A., it might be

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earned in many different ways, and mean as many different things. An M.A. of London was not required to reside in London, but an M.A. of Durham or Cambridge was obliged to reside for periods varying from one to four years at Durham or Cambridge. Even in the same university the degree of M.A. might be won in at least a dozen manners; he recommended Mr. Warner to study the calendars of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He did, and returned to inquire why so much importance was attached to residence? if a man could pass an examination without residing, why should he not? The curate talked of the spirit of the place, of social advantages, of the opportunity of hearing University sermons, of breathing the same air with men who had made European reputations. Indeed! was that so? Mr. Warner had carefully studied the lists of resident professors at both universities and found the names were all new

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to him. He proceeded to curse the ignorance of Muggleton.

Other members of the Board of Directors pursued similar researches independently; Mr. Finch wrote to Sors Suavigera for advice, and received the following reply: 'You had better let schoolmastering alone; all schools are deadly, cramping, dull; there will never be a good school till the young are taught to use their eyes in contemplating lovely, not ugly, things. First let our young people be healthy, then wise; whether they afterwards become wealthy is of no importance. Never teach a child to read; first give it a garden, then a pony, then let it learn to dance naturally; dancing-masters are absurdly unnatural; after that, if it wants to read, let it read Wordsworth, and Sesame and Lilies; and never allow it to see a railway embankment or hear a locomotive's shrieking, torturing, murderous whistle.'

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This communication appeared to Mr. Finch suggestive but unpractical. He wrote to ask an eminent politician whether a headmaster should necessarily be a student of the classics. The answer came by return on three postcards: 'I am not prepared to refuse to accept the fact that there may be outside the lines of strictly classical culture, instinct with the beauty of ancient Greece, and the immortal spirit of Homer, a culture which shall be more in accordance with the ever-advancing intellectual aspirations of the classes destined to control the government of our great country, or to deny a moulding of the intellect by means of mathematical pursuits, which is not plainly perceptible to those who have been mainly occupied in æsthetically studying the resplendent glories of the magnificent literature of antiquity. Wishing your undertaking every success—.'

Eventually the board met to decide upon the form of the advertisement for

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a headmaster. Immediately a difference of opinion declared itself as to the title to be given to the new school. The more ambitious suggested seminary and academy; Mr. Podbury thought High-Class School would give an accurate idea of what they proposed to establish. Mr. Warner suggested Public School, but was sternly corrected by Mr. Sussum. Did Mr. Sussum know what a Public School was? Yes, he did; it was nothing but cricketing, and boating, and footballing, and amusement. Mr. Finch thought Modern School a good title; but the Rector objected that in that case they would preclude themselves from the opportunity of attracting boys who wished to learn classics. It was eventually decided to christen the new institution Muggleton College, which name was felt to have the double merit of being dignified and indefinite.

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VI

In framing the advertisement the question of the headmaster's salary was seen to be of the highest importance. Mr. Podbury proposed that a sub-committee should be appointed to ascertain the market price of a headmaster; a desultory conversation ensued; comparisons were instituted between this official and other persons who enjoy fixed incomes—managers of tramway companies, curates, chief constables, town clerks.

On this arose other questions. Should he be required to give all his time, or only a portion of it, to the school? Should he partially pay himself by taking in boarders? After much discussion it was decided that

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while a liberal fixed income would be offered for the first two or three years, after that time the method of payment would be a small fixed income augmented by capitation fees; this arrangement having the great advantage that the headmaster could not neglect the school without injuring his own pocket—a great source of comfort to anxious parents. It took some time to convince Mr. Podbury of the wisdom of offering a fixed income to begin with: he had no opinion of a chap that wouldn't face his luck. It was demonstrated that unless the directors did something to show faith in their own undertaking, they could not hope to induce experienced men to leave certainties. Further argumentation settled the points that the headmaster was to be a Christian (Mr. Sussum), a gentleman (Mr. Parkinson), an M.A. of Oxford or Cambridge (Mr. Warner), sound in health (Mr. Beccles), solvent (Mr. Podbury), possessed of previous experience (Mr.

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Newsome), not necessarily in holy orders (the Rector), a scholar (Mr. Finch), acquainted with physiology and science (Dr. Hanley), of imposing personal appearance (Mr. Puddipher).

As all these qualifications could not be included in an advertisement, the Rector offered to write one based upon similar announcements in the *Guardian*, and this was seen to be after all the most practical course that could be taken. Mr. Newsome undertook to see that copies of it came under the notice of the teachers in the renowned board schools of Muggleton.

In due time the advertisement for a headmaster for Muggleton College appeared in the leading newspapers, in the *Saturday Review*, in the *Field*, in the *Guardian*, the *Journal of Education*, and *Illustrated London News*. No limitations were fixed as to the number of testimonials which each candidate might send in; and the offices of Mr. Finch, who had undertaken the duties of honorary secretary, were soon full

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to bursting with laudatory literature, in manuscript, in print, lithographed, typographed, jellygraphed, type-written. The Rector had so worded his advertisement, the board had offered so liberal a salary, that the world of teachers had opined great things of Muggleton. Junior masters from the young public schools, from Clifton, from Cheltenham, from Marlboro', cheerlessly contemplating a weary vista of celibacy, saw a haven of opulence in Muggleton; incapable men, over-capable men, square pegs in round holes, cats confident in the art of falling on their feet, men with theories, restless men, unsuccessful men, old men longing for independence, young men imprudently married, classical men, mathematical men, science men, men who could organise, men who had been at a German university, M.A.'s, Ph.D.'s, even half-pay majors, sent in testimonials to Muggleton.

And then the testimonials! Never was there a similar assemblage of autographs

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of ecclesiastical dignitaries: bishops had been attacked at afternoon teas after confirmations, deans captured at the hour of port wine; parents expanded in their confidence in Mr. X.; headmasters spoke as if his departure must ruin their establishments; heads of colleges at Oxford and Cambridge bore witness to regularity of conduct, and predicted merited success; men who prided themselves on always getting their candidates accepted wrote privately to the Rector; Mrs. Beccles was honoured with communications from her brother-in-law in behalf of an interesting candidate fresh from Oxford, who had a widowed mother, and every claim except that of ever having taught.

By way of getting the labour of selection simplified, Mr. Finch set to work to classify the testimonials. He first separated those of candidates over forty, then of those under thirty. In each class he established minor subdivisions—pure classics, pure mathematics, pure science,

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mixed subjects: *a.* classics predominating; *b.* mathematics ditto; and so forth. Then came men in orders; Church of England laymen; Nonconformists according to their various denominations. Soon it became apparent to him that he must also establish athletic classes—a rowing class, cricketing class, football class—and subdivide these further into proficients able to point to achievements in school elevens or 'varsity boats, and those who morally sympathised, but could show no record of distinctions. It proved unnecessary to establish classes for those who were not gentlemen or Christians. Eventually, provided with fifty-eight parcels tied up in red tape and docketed, Mr. Finch repaired to the preliminary or sifting committee. The testimonials had to be conveyed in a sack in a four-wheeler.

Mr. Parkinson meanwhile had not been idle. During the incubation of the school he had taken much trouble to acquire sound information as to the chief problems

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of high-class education. When away on business journeys he had conversed with likely-looking persons in railway carriages and hotels, nor disdained to pump chance acquaintances at hydropathic boarding-houses and the seaside. Mrs. Parkinson, a woman whose proudest boast was maternity, became the centre of a sort of women's educational debating society on the beach at Scarborough, and returned to impress upon her husband the necessity of establishing 'tone' in the forefront of the advantages to be offered by Muggleton College.

Mrs. Beccles, too, anxious to contribute her mite to the successful creation of Muggleton School, read all the educational treatises she could find in the free library; she studied the works of George Combe, the lives of John Lancaster and Pestalozzi; she took in the *Journal of Education*, and was impelled to purchase the works of the late R. H. Quick, of the great Dr. Thring, of Dr. Fitch, of Mr. Arthur

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Sidgwick; she called herself a Froebelian; tried to introduce Slojd into her own family; bought the sermons of eminent headmasters, and got confused notions as to the doctrine of the Trinity and the precise meaning of the Athanasian Creed. She read the Life of Dr. Arnold and *Tom Brown; Eric, and St. Winifred's, or the World of School*; and solemnly vowed that none of her darlings should ever go to a boarding-school. At the same time she protested that no headmaster would have her confidence, who was not just like dear Archdeacon Farrar.

The system of teaching spelling by means of phonics delighted her. She compelled the governess to try it upon her two youngest children: the health of the governess gave way. Each issue of the *Journal* supplied her with a fresh method of teaching geography or history, all of which she conscientiously tried in her own schoolroom, and her youngest darlings lisped of Alfred the Great and the British

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Constitution, respected the equator and found their latitude. Finding them fidgety, she took to various forms of drill recommended by experts—rapid movements of the head, twiddling of the fingers, rising on the toes, rolling of the eyes. Then she bought dumb-bells and Indian clubs. Not finding their bodies immediately develop under these exercises, she reverted to their minds and taught arithmetic with coloured balls on wire; with little boxes fitting into big ones; fractions were exemplified with slices of gingerbread cake, and she set sums dealing with the practical concerns of life. The children over-ate themselves with gingerbread, and reduced flocks of sheep to farthings, giving the answers in terms of wheelbarrow-loads of potatoes.

The results of these experiments were communicated to Mr. Beccles, who endeavoured to hand them on to Mr. Parkinson, by whom he was reassured all these things would come straight

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under a headmaster who thoroughly understood the secret of 'tone.' But how was 'tone' to be secured? At Eton it was supposed to be the result of always selecting an old Etonian for the post of headmaster, but Muggleton could not as yet boast old Muggletonians. Mr. Parkinson believed that much depended upon externals—upon white collars and tall hats—till he discovered that Marlburians also boasted of their 'tone,' but wore flannel caps; that Uppingham boys were capped like charity children, while the 'tone' of Harrow contrived to exist under broad-brimmed straw hats. There could be no harm in appointing a gentleman who had been bred in one of these establishments, where 'tone' was understood, and leaving him to foster it according to the ways and means which experience and instinct should show him to be most effective.

Eventually from the whole batch of candidates ten were selected to present

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themselves before the board. A strange mistrust of clergymen had declared itself, and only one was among the select. Mr. Newsome had insisted on the inclusion of a board school teacher in the list; Mr. Sussum on the selection of a Nonconformist of his own denomination. One gentleman was chosen on the strength of the enormous number of his testimonials from eminent headmasters: it subsequently proved that he had never been able to stay longer than a year at any school, but had accumulated testimonials from all. The majority had not expressed any decided views as to curriculum, intimating their willingness to be guided in this matter by the board and the needs of Muggleton; but an uncompromising classic and an equally stern mathematician had drawn to themselves the favour of Mr. Parkinson and Mr. Finch; the former guided by the traditional association of classics with 'tone,' the latter by the practical wants of the day.

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PART II

MUGGLETON COLLEGE

Among the many virtues practised in Muggleton, hospitality enjoys an important place; hence the proper reception and entertainment of the ten selected candidates caused some concernment to the never-tiring members of the Board of Directors or 'council,' as Mrs. Beccles was teaching them to call themselves.

The Muggleton hotels, highly respectable and commercial, were not thought likely to suit the refined tastes and presumably retiring disposition of scholarly gentlemen, and the Rector's suggestion that a candidate should be quartered upon each member of the council was

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gladly adopted. The arrangement seemed to give opportunities for privately and thoroughly sounding each candidate; indeed, as the Rector remarked, the opinion of the ladies, so valuable from their well-known intuitive perception of character, would in this way be obtained. Accordingly the names of the ten candidates were written on slips of paper, which were folded and put into Mr. Parkinson's tall white hat; and as each name was drawn the secretary was required to make a note of it, and to accompany the official intimation of selection addressed to each candidate with a note in the third person stating that Mr. So-and-so of such and such a house hoped to have the pleasure of entertaining Mr. A. or B. during his stay in Muggleton; an answer addressed to *Mrs.* So-and-so would oblige. The last sentence was the suggestion of Mr. Finch; it at once put the invitation on a courteous and friendly footing, and was in accordance

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with the usages of polite society. The lots fell very fortunately. Mr. Podbury was not burdened with the Greek scholar, nor was a Nonconformist inflicted upon the Rector; the clerical gentleman fell to Mr. Parkinson, while Mrs. Beccles, one beam of satisfaction on hearing that the most promising candidate had been assigned to Mr. Beccles, passed all her educational books in hasty review forthwith.

As the important day approached, further schemes of hospitable intent were mooted. Mr. Newsome's suggestion that all the candidates should be invited to meet all the council at the house of one of their number was negatived, as being likely to embarrass the gentlemen themselves, and as necessarily excluding the ladies, from whose valuable judgment so much was expected. At the same time it was obviously impossible to allow any stranger to leave a Muggleton house undined, or unimpressed with the magnificence of its best dinner services, company

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glass, finest table cloths, drawing-room upholstery, and primeval port. Again there were shareholders, not on the council, whom it was desirable to conciliate in favour of the gentleman eventually to be appointed, and whose unofficial opinion might in case of emergency weigh with those immediately responsible; indeed the manner in which each candidate might socially impress a small party of citizens was seen to be a thing making for or against his election. Mrs. Parkinson thought it most important that in families where there were children, the gentlemen should be introduced to the nursery; it was easy to see at once from the behaviour of the baby whether a man had a kind heart. In houses where there were no children recourse might be had to the instinct of dogs, and the visitor introduced to the kennel; it was wonderful how animals knew at once who was kind to them; though she admitted that little faith was to be placed in the prejudices

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of parrots, and men who were kind to dogs were not always kind to children.

Ten little dinner-parties being thus resolved upon, competition ensued for the services of the three professed cooks and six hired waiters who were accustomed to enhance the splendour of Muggletonian festivities. Mrs. Beccles, a born organiser, contrived to smooth away all difficulties by pointing out that, as the parties would be small, waiters would not be necessary; and by drawing up a routine, whereby each of the professional ladies could be engaged at three separate houses for a couple of hours to superintend the concoction of made dishes and soups, and dish up the elaborate confectionery which was the boast of Muggleton, leaving the rest of the banquet to the care of the permanent official; for herself, she would need no such assistance, having attended cookery classes and benefited by the lectures of Mr. Buckmaster, so that although she had never permitted herself the extravagance

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of a professed cook, her own kitchen was always in a state of high efficiency.

On the whole, when the day came the candidates were well satisfied with their entertainment; Mrs. Parkinson received her visitor surrounded by her children, Mrs. Beccles in the middle of her books; on the wall hung handsomely framed certificates of the College of Preceptors won by her daughters.

If any candidate had entertained misgivings as to the difficulties of his prospective work in Muggleton, these were speedily dissipated by the after-dinner conversations that took place on the basis of Muggleton port. The van of progress was obviously the vehicle in which Muggleton had travelled and intended to travel; so said its citizens; good will to the new school was a universal sentiment, indeed no appeal to the community had met with so liberal a response. Mr. de Clavering was trotted out, and Sir John Smith. The concord of religious parties was extolled,

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commercial prosperity vaunted, sewage system expatiated on, death rate extenuated. The absence of social distinctions was also alluded to; if any fault could be found with Muggleton society, it was that it was too much of a muchness, a defect which would be to some extent remedied by the permanent residence of a body of learned men in Muggleton, a social factor which the establishment of the new school promised to supply. In spite of a little button-holing behind doors and anxious inquiries about Greek, gymnastics, flogging, and technical education, each candidate retired to rest with the conviction that there was a great work to be done in Muggleton and that the conditions were favourable for its accomplishment.

On the following day a full meeting of the council was held in the Board room of the Company, temporarily located in the offices of Mr. Finch; the candidates attended in an ante-chamber, where they did their best mutually to convince one

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another that they were not in the least anxious about the result of the election. The Greek scholar was only waiting to satisfy himself that the rest of the Council were of the same kidney with Mr. Newsome; that fact proved, he would at once withdraw his candidature; 'a chairman of a school council talk about Sophocculs and Yury-pides, I 'll trouble you!' Indeed Mr. Newsome in deference to the predilections of his guest had hastily read up a few volumes of Mr. Collins's Ancient Classics for English Readers. Having at one time served upon the school board he had also talked largely of grades and standards, inquired whether the College could not be staffed cheaply and efficiently with ex-P.T.'s, and expressed himself in glowing terms on the merits of C. M's. Further he had permitted himself the liberty of hinting that a candidate who was supplied with a feasible scheme for the weekly payment of assistant masters by results would secure the confidence of

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the council forthwith, as also of the parents.

Other candidates imparted their experiences. Mr. Sussum's guest had been implored to deal tenderly with the poor children committed to his charge, and to remember the importance of the Word. Mr. Sussum did not hold with teaching children too much, his own lads would leave school soon after they were fourteen, and go abroad for a year or two to acquire foreign languages, after which berths would be found for them in different mercantile offices with which Mr. Sussum was connected. These being their prospects, he did not see what they wanted with Latin or Greek, or other new-fangled learning that was taught at the public schools. Family worship had then been held, and Mr. Sussum had read a passage from the New Testament in which had been mentioned the localities Bethanigh and Beth-pagey; after which Mr. Sussum was lifted up in extempore prayer, and

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offered a special petition in the interests of the guest of the evening.

These and similar revelations concurred to cause the Rector's guest much self-congratulation; family prayers had been dispensed with at the rectory in honour of the dinner party, and the Rector had discoursed much of his methods of dealing with the spiritual, intellectual, moral and material needs of submerged Muggleton; he spoke of the success of his week-day winter evening services for young people conducted in a corrugated-iron mission hall, with the aid of a brass band and magic lantern; he described the thrilling effect produced when in the darkness the words of a well-known hymn were flashed forth upon the sheet, and the melody at once taken up by the big drum and hundreds of young voices. At first he had found preaching in the dark rather dispiriting, and indeed certain irreverent lads had taken advantage of the opportunity to disturb the proceedings by

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caterwauling, whistling, flinging nut-shells at random, and imitating the cry of the milkman. In the end, however, better feelings had prevailed, and the church congregation had been largely reinforced from the mission hall. The Rector had also spoken largely and gratefully of the philanthropic energies of the leading inhabitants of Muggleton, and was especially eloquent upon the vigorous dealings of Mrs. Beccles in the cause of temperance; indeed he might say with confidence that with Muggletonians it was only necessary for a man to show that he was a man, and success followed; at first perhaps he would do well to humour their prejudices a little, to avoid making enemies, above all things to abstain from smart speeches and epigrammatic utterances, nor did the natives of Muggleton, even those in the best positions, understand paying for education; most of them had left school after learning little more than how to read, write, and work money sums; these

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accomplishments had cost them perhaps five shillings a week during their school-days, and having made fortunes upon this slender stock of learning, they were not likely to be easily convinced of the necessity of spending more upon their own children ; there was reason for hope, however, in the fact that some of them had become late in life aware of their intellectual deficiencies, and this had led to the foundation of Muggleton College.

The mathematical candidate had fallen to Mrs. Beccles. The fact that his qualifications were obviously in accordance with the scientific spirit of the age had induced a prevailing opinion that he was likely to be the future headmaster; but none of the gentlemen who had been invited to meet him at dinner had been able to recollect any remark that he had made, though they had been much astounded by the educational lore of Mrs. Beccles, and remarked on the way home, that it was a pity Beccles had not more of her go.

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Mrs. Parkinson had entertained the solitary clergyman with suavity and dignity; he was a married man, and had children of his own; the baby had no sooner caught sight of him than it reached out its closed hands and gurgled itself into a choking condition; he had taken both the little girls on his knees before dinner, and asked them if they knew their catechism; he proved to be acquainted with some of the local squirearchy, and Mrs. Marendon, he explained, was niece to Sir John Smith's first wife. At dinner his manner had been full of worth, and yet there had not been wanting evidence of an urbane jocosity, which was felt to be highly appropriate to the position to which he aspired. Taxed with the question of corporal punishments, he had deplored the occasional necessity of a resource to judicial violence; even Mrs. Parkinson had admitted that there were certain offences, bullying, lying, the use of foul language, tobacco smoking, drunk-

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enness and profanity, for which the rod was the only appropriate punishment; but of these Mrs. Parkinson was sure that her own boys would never be guilty, and so her mind being set at rest on the question of the cane, she remarked to Mr. Parkinson on retiring to rest: 'You mark my words, P., if you appoint that man he will make our school.' Mr. Parkinson was well content to find that his wife's opinion coincided with his own; he had raised the question of tone after the departure of their other guests, and received the most satisfactory replies. Mr. Marendon was an old Marlburian, belonged to an Episcopal family, had at present a boarding house at an important grammar school. Having found favour with the Parkinsons, his success was assured; for if there was a social fact in Muggleton, it was that Mrs. Parkinson was a social factor.

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II

WHILE the ten candidates were regaling one another with the humours of Muggleton in an ante-chamber, the council were taking a serious view of the situation in the large room which served as a board-room for the building societies and other companies whose affairs Mr. Finch directed in the capacity of secretary. During the informal conversation which preceded the chairman's solemn occupation of the chair, there had been a marked absence of the personal chaff usual on such occasions; all behaved like men bound on a desperate undertaking. Two alone of the company preserved a dignified equanimity. Mr. Parkinson, striding down the main street

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of Muggleton, had chanced upon the Rector emerging from the rectory garden; they proceeded to compare notes as to the behaviour of the candidates whom they had respectively entertained. The Rector was of opinion that if all the candidates were as well qualified as his own particular guest, they would have some difficulty in making a selection. Mr. Parkinson launched upon the merits of Marendon, his domestic ways, his affable manners, 'quite like one of ourselves,' though his grandfather and uncle were bishops, and his wife was connected with Sir John Smith. The Rector inquired into the nature of this connection, and on learning that it was through Sir John Smith's first wife, inquired if that magnate were on good terms with his first wife's family: 'Oh indeed yes, on the very best of terms; the present Lady Smith had been the particular friend of his first wife, had nursed her through her last illness, and in fact,' said Mr. Parkin-

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son, lowering his voice and bending to the rector's ear, 'mind, I should not like this repeated as if coming from me; the poor thing on her death-bed made him promise to marry no one else but the present Lady Smith.' The Rector pledged himself to discretion; had recently heard a remarkable story of a woman, who appeared to her husband *after* her death, and indicated to him the lady whom she wished to be her successor; it was a person whom he had never seen, and whom he met for the first time a few weeks later at a hydropathic establishment, and married within the year. The comforted widower had himself told the story to the Rector. Meanwhile the reverend gentleman was secretly congratulating himself that the Parkinsons had taken kindly to the one clerical candidate, and resolved not to press the claims of his own guest unduly.

Other persons communicated their experiences in hushed tones; even Mr.

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Podbury was awe-struck. His guest had inquired as to the standard of the cricket in the district, knew Muggleton as the home of a renowned football player, but had never heard of its sewage or free library; before going to bed he had slapped Mr. Podbury on the back, and declared that in ten years' time their eleven should play Rugby at Lord's. Mr. Sussum's guest had defended the study of Greek on the ground that it was the language of the Gospels, whereas everybody knew, as well as Mr. Sussum, that they were inspired in the original Hebrew.

Mr. Warner had been startled by finding that his candidate laughed at the College of Preceptors, and derided the local examinations of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and further, though a layman, did not see how the school could be worked without a chapel; while he was an advocate of compulsory attendance upon all kinds of things, even games, and failed to understand how a

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parent could possibly prescribe his son's curriculum with advantage.

But Mr. Newsome had suffered the severest disillusionment; his guest knew nothing whatever of the Education Code; it had been necessary to explain to him that a C.M. was a certificated master, and an ex-P.T. an ex-pupil-teacher; he had protested against the term 'grade' as a barbarous abuse of language, and expressed a wish that the whole board-school system of the country were at the bottom of the sea; and when Mr. Newsome had tried to adapt himself to his supposed preferences, and had discoursed of the glories of Ancient Greece and Rome, he had turned quite impatient, yawned several times, and begged to be shown to his room. These might be gentlemanly manners as they were understood at the universities and public schools, but they were not such as Mr. Newsome was used to at Muggleton.

As soon as the chairman had taken the chair, and the minutes of the last meeting

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had been read, a discussion arose as to the method of procedure. Should the merits of each candidate be voted upon as he left the room, or should they wait till they had seen all the candidates before proceeding to express their verdict on any? The general opinion seemed to be rather in favour of a double selection, a preliminary rejection of those who were obviously impossible candidates, and a second interview with the two or three survivors. This question had nearly been settled, and a formal resolution was on the point of being put to the vote, when Mr. Podbury obtained the chairman's leave to say a few words. He was in favour of waiting till all the candidates had been interviewed, and then that each member of the council should write two names on a bit of paper, his first and second choice. It was well known that in a recent election of a chief constable at Muggleton the wrong man had been elected;—yes, he, Mr. Podbury, did not hesitate to say so,

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though some of the magistrates were present. At this the Rector began to whisper to Mr. Parkinson, who showed obvious indications of snorting. 'The fact was that everybody came to a meeting of this kind previously pledged on personal grounds—(groans and interjectional protests)—he did not wish to suggest any improper motives, but it was well known.' At this point Mr. Parkinson angrily rose and wished to ask the chairman if . . . Cries of, 'Sit down, Parkinson, sit down,' while the Rector pulled at the coat tails of Mr. Podbury. In the midst of the confusion Mr. Finch's clerk came in with a note for the chairman—'Order, gentlemen, order'—and then Mr. Newsome explained that one of the candidates, who had come from a long distance, and wished to catch a train, was anxious to be interviewed at their earliest convenience. It was rapidly decided to receive the candidates at once, and vote upon each as he left the room.

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From time to time during the course of this preliminary discussion the room had been suddenly darkened, as though by the passage of voluminous bodies obstructing the light from the window. The ladies of Muggleton had simultaneously discovered that they had important reasons for shopping this morning, and that their business lay in the immediate vicinity of the street in which Mr. Finch's offices were situated. On this occasion Mrs. Parkinson might have been seen conversing with the Rector's wife in the open street, which was not unusual, and with Mrs. Sussum on the pavement, which was unprecedented. Knots and groups were formed, those who were not wives of councillors wished to hear of the impression produced by the candidates, and the air was filled with 'so gentle,' 'so high,' 'quite a better class person,' 'no consideration,' 'yawned in Mr. Newsome's face,' 'laughed at geography,' 'never looked at the children,' 'trod on the dog,' 'seemed to relish

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nothing,' 'father a bishop,' 'Sir John Smith's first wife,' 'wants to make games compulsory,' 'would use the cane under no circumstances,' 'didn't seem to have any ideas at all,' 'is very fond of dancing,' 'a bachelor.' And as the ladies gathered into a closer circle, this ball of maternity, ever rolling through the street, continually increased its dimensions till the lewd folk of Muggleton, under the impression that there was going to be a fight, or that some one was being taken to the hospital, thronged around, to the great embarrassment of the enlightened constabulary, who shrank from rudely ordering the Mayoress and the Rector's lady to move on. Eventually the party separated with many smiles, and nods, and 'so glad to have had this little talk with you,' and, 'feel quite different about it all now.'

Shortly afterwards Mr. Finch's clerk entered the board room with ten little notes upon a tray; one was addressed to each of the councillors. Mr. Beccles

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opened his and read: 'Vote with Parkinson.—M.B.' The majority of the others were to the same effect, but Mr. Sussum's communication contained a word of warning, 'Marrendun's too high for us,' and the tenor of one or two others was similar.

While the caucus of matrons was thus gathered together outside, Mr. Newsome's guest was being interviewed. The chairman had provided himself with a written list of questions, and things had gone smoothly till he inquired, 'What are your views about Greek, sir? Are you of opinion that all boys should learn Greek?' 'Certainly.' 'Then you would make Greek a compulsory subject?' 'Of course; there can be no education without Greek.' Mr. Newsome stiffened. 'And yet, sir, Her Majesty in Council has not prescribed it among the subjects to be taught in the Public Elementary or Higher Grade Schools of this country!' The candidate was not aware that he was

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wanted to direct a board school: he would prefer to leave that work to persons better qualified than himself. At this moment the Rector interposed: this was a subject on which he, in common with many other members of the Council, felt some anxiety, and indeed some considerable need of enlightenment; it was true that their school was intended to supply the want which had declared itself in Muggleton of something different from the board schools; at the same time local opinion, he feared, was strongly against the teaching of Greek. Could not Mr. Mitchell suggest some middle course? Mr. Mitchell wished to know whether he was right in assuming that the council wished to provide a liberal education? He was. Then they must teach Greek. But why? Had the council ever heard of a *gentleman* who had not learned Greek? Somebody mentioned Sir John Smith. 'Your member, for instance, Mr. de Clavering, was

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educated at Harrow, and his sons are at Eton; he learned Greek and his sons learn Greek.' Mr. Parkinson happened to have consulted Mr. de Clavering on this very subject; he had expressed an opinion that Greek was mere cram; he had spent five years learning a lot of words by heart, which he had clean forgotten. 'Then your Mr. de Clavering must have been a dunce.' The chairman interposed: he did not think Mr. de Clavering's name should have been introduced into the discussion, and hoped it would be allowed to drop; meanwhile, from an educational point of view, he wished to know the *value* of Greek. 'You can't get scholarships at the universities without it, even mathematical scholarships.' 'But the majority of our boys will not wish to go to the universities, they will leave school at sixteen and go into offices; would not French and German be of greater educational value to them, from a practical point of view,

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than Latin and Greek?' 'Oh, if you consider education from a practical point of view, why do you teach anything?' Nobody volunteered a reply to this question, and Mr. Podbury asked: 'Well, sir, I want to know this, will this Greek of yours enable a man to make a fortune?' 'No, sir, no more than your pounds, shillings, and pence will make a gentleman.' 'I think we have nothing further to say to Mr. Mitchell, gentlemen?' said the chairman, and Mr. Mitchell withdrew.

A rapidly passed and unanimous vote, to the effect that this candidate would not be required to present himself before the council again, intervened between the purple Podbury and explosion. The chairman decided with the consent of the council to confine his questions for the future to the non-controversial subjects, such as the nature of the schools in which the candidate had previously taught, the arrangement of their classes, the proper number of boys to be assigned to each

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teacher; while the candidate was to be allowed to ask questions as to the financial basis of the school, prospective number of pupils, and anything else which seemed to him of first importance; in this way it was opined that he might be beguiled into revealing the bias of his own mind, and enable them to gauge his mental capacity.

The candidate from the local board schools, assisted by Mr. Newsome, was able to give a very clear idea of the nature of the organisation of the establishments in which he had taught, but the others so confused their hearers with forms, shells, divisions, removes, classes, sets, modern sides and military departments, with schools whose forms ranked from the sixth downwards, and those which ranked from the eighth upwards, with call-overs, absences, adsums, monitors, prefects, ushers, and doctors of divinity, that the puzzled Podbury went audibly to sleep, and even Mr. Parkinson

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found it difficult to continue to maintain an appearance of knowing all about it. Peace, however, was happily preserved, although one candidate allowed himself to propound a series of questions as to the religious convictions of Muggleton, which appeared to the Rector sadly wanting in taste, and to Mr. Sussum irreverent.

In the end Mr. Marendon and the board school master were the only candidates required for further interviewing; and at this period Mr. Parkinson cut matters short by stating that, whatever other persons might do, he was quite certain that Mrs. Parkinson would not allow her sons to attend a school not presided over by a gentleman; and as it seemed at once to be obvious to everybody except Mr. Sussum that teaching in a board school was incompatible with being a gentleman, Mr. Marendon was duly elected Headmaster of Muggleton College.

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III

On a fine September afternoon the ceremony of opening the new school was performed by the Bishop of the diocese in which Muggleton is so happily situated. Mr. Newsome had been of opinion that it would be altogether appropriate to the occasion, that the headmaster should publicly enter upon his functions after the Bishop had declared the school open. Mr. Warner sought in vain for the ritual ordinarily observed at the installation of a headmaster, but discovered an old number of *Punch*, in which the headmaster of Eton was represented in the act of accepting a birch rod from the hands of the head of the school. Mr. Beccles protested against the barbarity of at once

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associating the education of the young with corporal punishment, while Mr. Podbury thought the ceremony would be improved if the headmaster, on receiving the birch, should then and there flog a boy, and offered one of his nephews to grace the sacrifice. Urbanely putting aside this frivolous suggestion, Mr. Newsome had asked Mr. Marendon whether he could not see his way to teaching a class in the presence of the assembled parents, and showing them at once what would be the nature of the education. Mr. Marendon opined difficulties, and Mr. Newsome reluctantly abandoned his suggestion. In spite of the strong Nonconformist element in Muggleton no objection was raised to the presence of the Bishop at the opening ceremony.

He had only recently succeeded to the diocese, had not had time to awaken animosity, and, having been the headmaster of one of our great public schools, might be glad to show some active

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interest in the new undertaking; whereas the local notabilities were all stale dishes; Sir John Smith was prosy, the Archdeacon pugnacious, Mr. de Clavering would appear to associate the school exclusively with one political party, the Mayor was of no importance, the nearest resident peer of the realm at Newmarket.

When the company were all arranged in the great school-room, the councillors and their wives on the platform, parents of pupils in the immediate vicinity, the Mayor and Corporation in their robes on one side and a military band on the other, in the far end of the room the hundred boys whose names had that morning been inscribed on the school books, the Bishop asked the Rector whether he had drawn up a form of prayer for the occasion, and, finding that that was not the case, proceeded to offer an extempore petition on behalf of the new school, and then addressed the company assembled as follows:

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'I hold it to be a peculiarly fortunate occurrence that my first appearance on a public platform in this town should be occasioned by the inauguration of an enterprise so absorbingly interesting as the establishment of a great school. I repeat—a *great* school, for though I use the word in anticipation of the event, I see around me such evidence of care and thought in the material appliances, in the building in which we are at present assembled, in the playground outside its walls; I read a prospectus worded in so generous, so noble a spirit; that to doubt of the ultimate success of your undertaking were to doubt the merits of all human foresight.

'I have long felt that our nation has suffered a loss, or rather has failed to make use of its opportunities, in permitting the education of the sons of the directing classes to be conducted away from home. The loss has been of a two-fold character; on the one hand the boys

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have lost the advantage of growing up with their sisters, have become strangers to their own families; and on the other hand the parents, ceasing to be the companions and friends of their children, not assisting in their education, have missed one of the most fruitful experiences that life gives us, the stimulus of assisting in the development of young eager minds. Even more—the public schools, themselves isolated in country districts, far from the influence of the parents, lose sight of many of the most interesting problems of education, or attach overhigh value to those that are less important, while the teachers, living in a society of their own, removed from criticism, not mixing with the active world of business, are in danger of failing to grasp the tendencies of the age in which they live, and through want of a due comprehension of the forces which are at work around them, to estrange themselves in spite of their noble aspirations from the public sympathy.

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'It is very greatly to the credit of the citizens of Muggleton that your town should be the first purely commercial town that has endeavoured to bring the public school system of England to the very doors of its citizens. You might have acted so very differently. This has been an age of great material prosperity, and I have observed that all the popular cries in the matter of education are cries for what is assumed to be likely to increase the material prosperity of the individual and of the nation. There is a cry for the creation of a number of knowledge shops in which the arts by which wealth is acquired may be learned. There is no cry for that training without which the highest technical proficiency is valueless; there is, I say, no cry for moral, and may I add, spiritual training.

'You have not made this mistake; you have not begun by establishing a College of Technical Science, with its classes independent of one another, its total want

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of coherence, its indifference to all but the immediate pecuniary advantages to be gained by learning; you have started with a school, which declares itself to be modelled on the public schools, and to concern itself with the moral, the religious, no less than the intellectual training of its pupils. Again I say, you are wise in the modesty with which you have refrained from trying to create a new thing, and in being content to take and use that very excellent thing already existing, a public school education.

'It is possible that some one might ask me wherein the special merit of a public school education resides, and therefore I hope you will have patience with me while I say a few words on that interesting subject.

'A public school, as distinct from a place where marketable information is sold, aims less at imparting knowledge than at moulding character. I would ask you: What to the majority of us is the

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pecuniary value of Latin and Greek? And I boldly answer: None whatever. It is also possible to make a large fortune without comprehending Euclid; even to conduct manufacturing operations involving the application of scientific discoveries without understanding chemistry, or metallurgy or geology. Therefore, as there is no branch of knowledge of which it can be said: "to understand this will lead boys to material prosperity," our public schools have thought less of the commercial value of the subjects that they teach than of their value in a purely educational aspect. Education is more a matter of personal influence than of imparting information, and for this reason Latin and Greek and mathematics occupy the forefront in the curriculum of our public schools; for no man can be a sound scholar in either of these branches of knowledge without industry, patience, and considerable mental activity. The teacher trained only in subjects easily

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acquired is less likely to possess that moral force without which the young are not to be influenced than he who has qualified himself by exceptionally hard work. Further, as no man can say that he has exhausted what may be learned of Latin, of Greek, of mathematics, so the teacher of these subjects can never relapse into a mere machine, grinding out rule-of-thumb prescriptions, but must be continually adding to his own stock of knowledge; will ever, while he teaches, learn.

'But the work of these schools is not confined within the four walls of the class-room. During the lesson hours the boys are encouraged to contemplate the patriotic virtues of the heroes of antiquity, and of their own forefathers; in the play-time they put these lessons into practice. Manly games, in which each boy plays, not for himself, but for his house or school, introduce him at once to the conception of a life in which the individual and his interests are of less importance than those

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of the house in which he lives, of the school in which he is taught, than those of the country which has given him birth.

'In the playground the public school-boy learns that it is disgraceful to be a coward, contemptible to be unmanly, worse than contemptible to cheat; he acquires the difficult and valuable habit of subordinating himself willingly to his equals, and in due time is invested with the responsibility of controlling others. It was a wise maxim of an old Greek philosopher, that the essence of political life was to understand the art of obeying as well as the art of ruling. Boys learn the habit of self-abnegation for a common purpose in their games.

'For this reason I rejoice to see that a playground has been one of your first considerations in the establishment of your new school; and I hope you will forgive me if I remark that you have provided playground space with a commendable liberality.

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'There is a further feature in the life of a public school on which I feel sure that you will expect me to say something, and the omission of which would leave the picture most incomplete. I allude to the important place which is occupied in it by religion.

'For my own part I cannot conceive how religion can be set apart from any scheme for educating the young, and I hold it to be a national disgrace that our sects and denominations were unable, at the time when the Elementary Education Act was passed, to fix upon some common ground in religious instruction, rather than eliminate the teaching of religion altogether from the schools. God be thanked for the perceptible diminution of bitterness in sectarian animosities, and for the hope that is now beginning to spring in many hearts, that before long religion may be restored to her proper place in our national education!

'Meanwhile you have set the example

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of ignoring religious differences, and are thus creating a truly religious school; there is so much that is common to all sects of Protestant Christians, so little difference between those inside and those outside of the Established Church, that I have no doubt my excellent friend, Mr. Marendon, will be able to discover forms of prayer and forms of worship of Almighty God in which the children of parents of all denominations will be able devoutly and reverently to join.

'At the end of the room I see the children who are to profit by the work which you, their friends and parents, have begun. My heart goes out to them; theirs is the future; I see them as heirs to the heritage of our race, as those who will be the guardians after ourselves of the glories of England. My boys! do you ever think of what that means—to be the countrymen of Shakespeare and Milton, of Drake and Nelson, of Sir John Willoughby and Wellington, of Walter

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Scott. What a tremendous obligation to act worthily as kinsmen of such gallant names!

'If you would learn to be like them, you must begin by making your school of more importance than your home, as hereafter your country will be more to you than your school. Do not think that you will come here merely to learn lessons, you will come here to learn life.

'And what a responsibility is yours, Mr. Headmaster! I see around you men whose names are not dishonourably known in the class lists of Oxford and Cambridge, men who have turned to the fullest profit both sides of the life of our ancient universities, who are as well spoken of in the cricket field and on the silvery Thames as in the schools. It rests with you to show the value of the lives you have lived, and the arts that you have learned; with you to uphold the tradition of the spotless honour of the English gentleman, with you to show that

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the Christian is no milk-sop, the scholar not incapable of taking his part in the contest of life. Yes, yours is a glorious responsibility—you will hand on the tale "that our fathers have told us of the things that were done in their time," you will keep before the eyes of the young of this important town the image of a noble life. You will permit me to say that I envy you; I envy you the cultivation of this virgin soil. I envy you the great possibilities of your work. The spirit of Eton is not confined to her battlemented buildings and her stately lawns, nor is the lesson of Harrow thrown away when her hill has become a reminiscence; dying lips of brave young soldiers have murmured *Floreat Etona*, in the Crimean trenches, on the African battlefields; there is many a lonely fortress where the names of Rugby, of Marlborough, of Clifton are fondly repeated over the evening fire with all the exile's passion for home and the stimulus of a patriotic reminiscence. Let

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it be your task to bring here what you have learned there, to show that honour and pluck are not limited to locality; to make the boys committed to your charge, the noble, true, pure gentlemen that their forefathers have been, and may God be with you in your work!'

During the course of this oration the self-esteem of Muggleton perceptibly rose, and when at the end of it the aged Pilling involuntarily broke out into a loud Amen, nobody seemed to feel that there was any incongruity. The other speakers confined themselves to expressing their high appreciation of what had been said by the Bishop; except Mr. de Clavering, who made as much of the ladder from the gutter to the university as could fairly be demanded of an ambitious politician. Mr. Podbury was, however, observed to look perplexed, and Mr. Sussum uncomfortable; and if Mrs. Parkinson was somewhat stony, Mrs. Beccles from this time forward talked of the 'dear Bishop' on

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each and every occasion that presented itself. Mrs. de Clavering from the place of honour on the Bishop's right had assumed an expression of benignant superiority suitable to one who knew well from beforehand all that was going to be said.

There were those among the audience who thought the Bishop might have spoken less of Latin and Greek and more of Almighty God.

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IV

Mr. Marendon entered upon his work with cheerful anticipations; he had previously sought and obtained an interview with an eminent headmaster. This dignitary cautioned him against the danger of being doctrinaire; he must be prepared to find the usual curriculum of the English public schools not altogether acceptable at Muggleton, and as he would have the entire organisation of the school in his own hands, and would not be fettered by any pre-existing prejudices or traditions, he could have the rare chance of evolving a thoroughly satisfactory educational course for boys not destined for the universities. Being pressed for an opinion as to what such a course should

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be, the learned gentleman said that Mr. Marendon would do best to find out what the parents wanted; they would probably demand modern languages in place of the classics, be strong on chemistry and other branches of science. On the religious question he foresaw no difficulties, provided of course that nothing extreme were attempted; even the Church of England prayers might be read in the school, if only a manuscript copy were to be used and not a prayer-book. On one point he could not help having some misgivings, viz.: on the subject of home influence. It was notorious that the home life of the English middle classes was disastrous to the young. Boys learned from the example of their fathers to smoke and even play cards; the conversation of elder brothers was wont to be destructive of morality; few were the houses in which any effective discipline was maintained, and there were many homes in which family prayers were habitually neglected.

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At this moment a loud roaring was heard outside the study, and the headmaster's wife almost immediately entered, leading a refractory small boy by the hand. 'I wish, dear, you would speak to Alfred; I can't make him go to bed; Nurse has been waiting to bath him for the last half-hour.' The headmaster turned round with an amused but dignified expression. 'Come here, Alfred; what is this your mother says! You won't go to bed? This is very disobedient; why don't you do as your mother tells you?' 'Oh, please, father, I wanted to say good-night to you first, and mother said there was a strange gentleman and I mustn't come in, and do let me sit up a little while longer, I'm not a bit sleepy.' 'Well, well,' said the headmaster, now all smiles, 'perhaps nurse can wait a quarter of an hour longer, if you will promise to be a good boy another time.' And mother and son withdrew, after the former had explained to Mr. Marendon

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that her husband always spoiled that boy sadly.

The next morning Mr. Marendon was urbanely dismissed with a parting recommendation to be sure and humour his council, and if possible adopt some of their crotchets, should they prove to have any.

The school had not been long opened when a slight difference of opinion declared itself on the question of assistant masters; Mr. Marendon had imported a small band of earnest young men, some with teaching experience, some without, who had all been in the VIth Form of some one of the great public schools, been captain of elevens, rowed in college boats, played football for their universities, taught in Ragged Schools, been in residence at Toynbee Hall, and delivered University Extension Lectures, gone into retreat at Keble College, when opportunity offered.

But these various merits did not seem to impress public opinion at Muggleton,

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and Mr. Marendon was urged to disarm opposition by appointing as visiting masters some of the popular and respected teachers already working in the town, and especially to induce Professor Albertino to give lessons in dancing at the school. Accordingly Monsieur Moreau was engaged to give French lessons, and Herr Gumpel, the renowned author of a whole series of courses in every known European language, was retained to teach German.

The council further pressed Mr. Marendon to engage a skilled teacher of chemistry at a very high salary. Nothing could be more convincing to the parents of the eminently practical lines on which the school would be conducted.

For the present the dancing lessons were deferred. There was a difficulty about providing partners for those ambitious of learning to waltz.

Never was a school so well organised as Muggleton College. Mr. Marendon drew

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up a large time-table, which occupied some twelve square feet of the wall of the entrance hall, and which mapped out the time of every boy and every master with rigid precision; and then he drew up a cycle of subjects, something like the four-course system of agriculture, assigning to the growing intellect the work suitable for each period of its development in the order recommended by the best educational authorities. To each master was assigned with careful minuteness exactly how little he was to teach in the course of a term, and no boy could proceed to higher subjects till he was thoroughly grounded in those that were elementary. Spelling had soon to be excluded from the list of elementary subjects; and the youth of Muggleton, so quick in learning to add and multiply, refused to subtract or divide. An opinion against impositions having declared itself, these were replaced by half hours of compulsory drill. Corporal punishment,

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except by the highest authority, was forbidden. The suggestions of Mr. Arthur Sidgwick in his essay on 'Stimulus' were faithfully followed out, but it was discovered that boys are more interested in their school-fellows than any other subjects, and prefer pinching one another to writing Latin prose.

The accomplishments were not forgotten: drawing was taught in all its branches, all boys were required to learn to sing. Those who did not wish to learn Greek were instructed in shorthand, book-keeping by double entry, and mensuration. The small minority who rejected Latin were deluged with simple arithmetic. In the end Mr. Marendon ventured to hope that he had hit the taste of every parent, when the boys were each devoting two hours a week to fourteen different subjects.

Out of school, too, the work was actively carried on. The young men fresh from the universities, anxious to acquire

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a wholesome moral influence over their pupils, played football with them, bowled to them, ran steeplechases, walked arm-in-arm with them. They even complied with external suggestions. Mrs. Beccles, having recently read a volume by Professor Guthrie on the teaching of geography, urged Mr. Marendon to form an outdoor geography class. Two boys tumbled into a ditch, one shot a partridge with a catapult, and the rest returned home dead tired and covered with mud. A shower of indignant notes from aggrieved mothers was the only tangible result of the experiment.

Home lessons turned out to be a serious difficulty. Parental opinion ranged between two extremes; some held that home work should be abolished, others that it was the first duty of the schoolmaster to give the boys something to keep them quiet in the evenings. Some parents aided their sons to the extent of doing their exercises for them, others dis-

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claimed even the responsibility of seeing that the boys sat down to work. Problems in simple arithmetic had to be excluded from the list of home lessons, as the friction with mothers who had provided their sons with erroneous solutions proved overwhelming. Then Muggleton seemed suddenly to be smitten with impecuniosity, the fees were unanimously voted too high, and the difficulty of collecting them was great. Parents with large families pressed the council for a reduction of terms; eventually it was decided that only eldest or single sons should pay full fees, each succeeding brother paying less, till the fourth paid nothing at all. Parents who had done such services to the state as to bring more than three sons into the world obviously had a right to have them educated for nothing. 'At whose cost?' growled Mr. Podbury, 'That of the teachers,' suggested Mr. Sussum.

The collecting of fees proved an in-

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surmountable task till somebody recollected the ingenious expedient of the Girls' Public Day School Company, who require the children to bring a receipt for the term's fees on the first Monday of each term. The child not complying with this regulation is not summarily ejected, but the parent is happily shamed before his own offspring. Muggleton eventually succumbed to this tremendous disciplinary engine. But no one proved too rich to ask for a remission of fees when a boy had been absent from school for a fortnight.

The far-seeing council having neglected to provide the school with a lending library or cricket pavilion, Mr. Marendon thought that funds could easily be raised for these purposes by subscription. The parents, however, declaring that the fees were high enough already, asked why they should be invited to improve the property of the shareholders. Meanwhile they loudly protested that they had been de-

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frauded in the inducements at first held out to them. There was no swimming-bath, no bicycle track, not one of the promised attractions.

Presently an opinion began to spread in Muggleton that this high-class education was a sham. One boy could not write, several others could not spell. The addition of money sums was uncertain. Several parents, examining their boys over the evening preparation, found them totally incapable of explaining what they had been taught during the day. Meanwhile the playground was observed to be always full, and youths who could not add straight, discoursed largely of cricket, pored over the sporting columns of the local papers.

The council were assailed individually in their places of business, urged to remonstrate with the headmaster. The local public conveyances were shaken with the wagging of heads.

Mothers, too, began to pour into sym-

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pathetic ears harrowing tales of atrocities committed upon the persons of their offspring, either by their schoolfellows or the 'barbarian youths' who had been entrusted with the solemn responsibility of teaching them.

One boy had been required to stand for a whole hour, simply for whistling in school, while another who had in the most cowardly and disgusting fashion inked a collar had escaped without so much as a reprimand. It was notorious that the boys were allowed to do things at school which they would not be allowed to do at home; there was no discipline, no obedience, no veneration.

Mothers began to seek personal interviews with Mr. Marendon. They expatiated on the neglect of this subject, on the undue prominence given to that; protested against the omission of geography, asked what had become of *Mangnall's Questions* and *Lindley Murray's English Grammar*.

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Soon graver questions arose. The Rector called one day to protest against the want of supervision in the playground; his youngest boy had come back from school using the most dreadful language.

Mr. Marendon made stringent inquiry, discovered that Leopold Parkinson was in the habit of using obscene and disgusting words. Leopold Parkinson was flogged. After this Mr. Marendon was not well received at the Parkinsons'.

Eventually the council met, laid their grievances before Mr. Marendon, asked what was to be done. He suggested that an examiner should be appointed not connected with the school, who should inspect it and present a report. This was done. The report spoke in the highest terms of the arrangements, buildings, organisation and work, warmly congratulated the council upon the flourishing character of their school.

This document was printed and circulated among the parents, who looked

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knowing, and asked one another how much Marendon had paid the examiner for his report.

One day Mr. Marendon, sitting in his study awaiting parental interviews, heard a smart rap at the door. When it opened, Mrs. Parkinson entered, heated, agitated, voluminous.

Having seated herself, the lady first made a stately apology for having come in person; Mr. Parkinson was away from home, and the matter on which she came to speak was so serious that it admitted of no delay. One of her boys had been most abominably treated by a school-fellow, one Billy Watson had—well, she would rather be excused from saying what he had done. Tears welled in her eyes. Mr. Marendon explained that the accusation against the other boy must be formulated in order that judicial inquiry should be made. No—Mrs. Parkinson could on no account defile her tongue with a recital of what had happened.

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Perhaps she would not object to writing on a piece of paper. This compromise was accepted. Mrs. Parkinson wrote and handed the paper to Mr. Marendon, who at once rose from his seat. 'What—you do not mean to say that he actually——'

'Stop, sir, stop, I will not hear such language—you shall not insult a lady, sir! Though you do teach your boys to swear and to scoff and to disobey their parents, I am sure my children never used bad language before you came here, and it 's a shame that such things should be allowed to go on. And if you were a gentleman, Mr. Marendon, you would get up and open the door for me.' So saying, the matron rose in a whirl of wrath, and backed out of the door with a solemn courtesy straight into the arms of the school porter, who happened to be coming up the passage with a tray full of ink-pots in his hand.

Even Mrs. Beccles at last wavered in her allegiance to the school; repeatedly on

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fine days she had sent down to ask for a holiday, which had invariably been refused, and none of the little Beccles had won prizes.

All parents whose boys had bad reports withdrew them at once, expatiating to their friends upon the unsoundness of the teaching.

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V

WITHIN four years of the opening of Muggleton College, Mr. Newsome summoned an urgent, extraordinary and secret meeting of the council. His life had become a burden to him. His progress through the streets was retarded by discontented parents, and for months he had been forced to abstain from the luxury of riding in a public conveyance, where flight was impossible. He was reviled in the local press, bespattered with ridicule; indignant shareholders compared him to historic swindlers. The school neither paid a dividend nor provided that thorough education so glowingly described by the Bishop in his opening address. Mr. Parkinson, not feeling satisfied with the 'tone,' had taken Mr. de Clavering's

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advice, and sent his boys to Eton ; other parents, captivated by the glowing description of the assistant masters, had sent their sons to the schools from which these exemplary young men had descended upon Muggleton. Another and a larger class of parents reverted to the board schools. The Rector himself had given notice to withdraw his sons.

None the less, the reports of the successive examiners were invariably favourable, and the boys who went to other schools did well. Mr. Newsome expressed himself puzzled; he had reason to suspect a great want of method in the management, would be glad to hear what other gentlemen had to say on the subject. Mr. Podbury spoke on behalf of his nephews ; could not complain of anything except that they seemed to be acquiring a great deal of useless knowledge. If other people were discontented it was probably because they did not allow their children to be flogged. Mr. Puddipher, hitherto a

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silent member of the council, ventured to suggest that they had made a mistake in not placing the headmaster and assistants on a really commercial footing; they should be paid per value of goods delivered, and not fixed salaries, which encouraged them to neglect their work. Mr. Warner asked how the value of the goods delivered was to be ascertained. Mr. Sussum asserted that every parent could at once see whether his children were getting on. The Rector had reason to believe that the discipline was very bad; he thought that they could do no better than make a sudden and personal inspection of the school; they would then be able to convince the parents that they had taken every possible step to secure its efficiency. The general sentiment at once ruled in favour of this measure, though Dr. Hanley and Mr. Warner protested that to treat like fraudulent tradesmen the men to whom parents had delegated their sacred function was

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to make all schools impossible. They were not, however, listened to, and in the end it was moved by Mr. Sussum and seconded by Mr. Beccles, that on the following Thursday morning at ten o'clock the council should meet at the school and forthwith inspect the classes. This vote was passed without a division.

On the appointed day the porter threw open the folding doors of the big school-room and announced the chairman and council of the Muggleton College Company Limited.

It is one of the many pleasing peculiarities of Muggleton that no secret has ever been known to be kept in the town. The ladies say that the men blab everything at their clubs, or waste the precious office hours in idle gossip. The gentlemen retort that as every husband in Muggleton virtuously imparts all confidential statements to his wife, the leakage takes place over the tea-table. Be this as it may, Mr. Marendon had received

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timely warning, and had found a pretext for detaining the whole school in the big school-room till the expected visitors' arrival. As Mr. Newsome with some embarrassment stepped up the centre of the big room, followed by the goodly procession of his colleagues, Mr. Marendon rose from his chair and with ceremonious politeness welcomed the visitors—at the same time inquired the reason of the visit. Mr. Newsome having stated that they had come to inspect the school, the headmaster replied that the interest thus shown in the school was most flattering to himself and his assistants. He would like this inspection to be thorough; and as the number of the visitors happened to correspond with the number of forms, he at once told off a member of the council to each form, and requested the head boy to lead him to the class-room. Before the amazed council could protest, each had been marshalled into a room, unsupported

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by his colleagues, and brought face to face with some twenty boys for the first time in his life. The majority collapsed then and there, feeling their knees give under them, and after nodding to the one or two neighbours' sons whom they recognised, and exhorting the class generally to be very good boys, escaped as expeditiously as possible. But there were those who were made of stouter stuff.

Mr. Podbury boldly seated himself at the magisterial desk, and having taken the morning paper from his pocket told the boys to learn their tasks. What tasks? they inquired. 'The tasks which their teacher had set them.' These proved to be in French and Latin, subjects with which Mr. Podbury had not a speaking acquaintance. He inquired whether no English was taught in the school, and on being shown a book of selections of English poetry, picked out Gray's *Elegy*, the only English poem of which he knew the name, ordered the class to

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commit it to memory, and reverted to his paper, previously asserting loudly that the first boy who spoke or laughed would have his ears boxed. Dead silence ensued. Shortly afterwards a mild-mannered youth approached Mr. Podbury and asked for permission to look for his book, which he averred was on the master's desk. Leave having been magnificently granted, the boy proceeded to rummage first above the desk and then below it, while Mr. Podbury remained absorbed behind his paper. Presently strangely explosive sounds began to be heard in the room, and all of a sudden Mr. Podbury felt the back of his neck assailed by something which had sharp hooked claws. He threw down his paper, jumped up with a shout, and rushed with a roar of pain from the room amid yells of laughter. One of his nephews happened to be in the room, who being well aware of Uncle Pod's horror of cockchafers, an insect of which he invariably carried a few specimens in

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a small tin box in his pocket, had induced the mild youth to deposit two or three gently on the person of his respected uncle.

Mr. Podbury forbore to mention this incident afterwards, but expressed himself strongly upon the subject of the want of discipline.

Shortly after this heroic devotion on the part of the council, Mr. Sussum discovered that a Winter Garden and Recreation Ground was the want of Muggleton. He formed a company; Mr. de Clavering invested £1000 in shares. The Council of Muggleton College, glad to be rid of a responsibility which they felt themselves unfit to deal with, sold the school buildings and playground at a considerable loss; and now the children of the poor of Muggleton trundle hoops under palm-trees on the spot where the Bishop delivered his oration.

The Muggleton Winter Garden and Recreation Ground Company Limited pays four per cent.

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ST. THEOBALDS

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I

MUGGLETON COLLEGE ceased to exist as a place of education, but institutions so important do not pass away without discomfort and inconvenience to a large number of people. It was in this spirit that Mr. Edward Mannington pondered one evening a few weeks before the end of that term which was to see the conclusion of the great enterprise of Muggleton. He had been senior classical assistant, and was now searching unsuccessfully for employment elsewhere, though provided with testimonials fit to carry a bishopric. His form-room had been one of the best ordered in well-ordered Muggleton; his severities the theme of awe-stricken juniors fearfully anticipating promotion;

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mothers had openly stated of him in public conveyances, that they had no fault to find with him, except that he was given to teaching 'so much more than was necessary, you know'; and some of them even privately manœuvred in conjunction with their sons to evade the subjects which he so rigorously taught.

Sitting in the window of Mrs. Maxwell's first-floor front, and watching the late June sun set through the veil of smoke which testifies to the prosperity of Muggleton, he moodily racked his brains to discover the cause of the failure of the school. The discipline had been good, the work had been good, the boys were as capable as most boys; some of them well above the average; the playground had been well organised; fads duly encouraged; even the amateur fire brigade and ambulance classes successfully established. Nor had the animal weaknesses of parents been disregarded. Finding

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that a bad report on an idle boy was resented by most mothers as a personal insult, rather worse than a slap on the face, Mr. Marendon had issued orders, that no reports were to be sent out that were not laudatory; boys had been allowed to spend their own birthdays, their mothers' birthdays, their fathers' birthdays, the birthdays of all their little brothers and sisters at home. Every pains had been taken to persuade the Muggletonian mothers that they were having their own way in everything, yet not without forcing them to accept the one thing they did not want, a good education for their children. 'Perhaps we manœuvred too late!' reflected Mannington. 'We showed our colours too openly at first; it is a great pity that we ever attempted to teach anything.' And as the red streaks faded in the west the whole bitterness of failure sank into his soul, and he said aloud:

'The fact is, parents hate a good school;

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it is an institution that can only subsist, where they cannot get at it.'

'Then why not start one out of their reach?' said a voice in the dusky regions of the door.

The speaker was one Summers, a colleague, but not an intimate friend of Mannington, who was not over and above pleased to have to welcome this particular visitor. He had been wanting to see Mannington for some days, so he said, and seeing the front door open had taken the opportunity of running up without having to ring and encounter the pursey Mrs. Maxwell, a woman with as many internal complaints as a ship's boiler, and of unutterable prolixity in confidence.

'Hope I don't intrude!' continued Summers. 'Should be sorry to disturb you in enumerating all the false concords in a set of lower fourth exercises, or any other pleasing and intellectual occupation.'

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'No, I am doing nothing; I really did not notice it was so late; stay and have some supper, I hate feeding alone.'

'So do I, and as I want to have a serious talk with you, and a long talk, I will thankfully accept your invitation; moreover, I know that there 's the fourth day of a cold shoulder of mutton awaiting me at my diggings, and your blowsy Mrs. Maxwell can at any rate cook a chop. Poor soul! I wonder which department of her interior is most active in troubling her just now.'

In due time supper was brought and devoured; a chronic ailment of Mrs. Maxwell's sympathised with, pipes lighted, and the two young men prepared for serious conversation.

'You were saying you had something to talk about, Summers?'

'Yes. Have you got work for next term?'

'No, when you came in, my thoughts were busy with that very subject.'

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'I have not found work myself yet, but with help from you, I think I can do so.'

'I am mighty glad to hear it; for if I may judge your case by my own, the prospect was a desperate one, and humiliating to boot.'

'Well now, what do you say to this?' and Summers proceeded to disclose his scheme

'Why not start a private school out in the country?'

Mr. Summers had not wasted his time at Muggleton. Engaged principally for athletic reasons, and not having been entrusted with any very responsible work, or any large quantity of work, he had spent a good many of his odd moments in visiting the parents of those boys who were attracted by his easy manners, good temper, and mastery over a cricket ball. He could run faster than any boy in the school; had secured by his own personal efforts a victory for the town football team against the

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champions of adjacent Liverpool; was reputed to be able to break a poker on his arm; had put Tommy Podges in a chair, and held the chair out at arm's length by one leg. No wonder he was popular. At the rectory he was particularly well received, for his grandfather was a Dean, and the Rector, himself an old Blue, liked an honest young fellow with no nonsense about him. Mrs. Beccles, indeed, had rather sniffed at him, till it became obvious that the charms of Miss Theodora Beccles had won his heart; but Mrs. Parkinson had felt like a mother to him from the moment she saw him playing with her boys in the garden; and the little girls were never tired of sitting on his knee, and pulling his moustache. In fact, he was a general favourite; not like that Mannington, who never seemed to understand what you said, and might be very learned, and all that, but certainly was a failure in general society.

'But what made you think of asking

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me to join you?' said Mannington; 'to be frank with you, I don't see that we have much in common.'

'No! that's just it. I want some one to help me who will not be exactly like myself. One *must* teach something, you see. And I am well known to be incapable of teaching anything — by my colleagues. As to getting on together, well, we can easily arrange not to see too much of one another if we find we don't suit; and you'll have your department, and I'll have mine. Oh! it will go like a house on fire.'

'But,' said Mannington, 'is it not after all, commercially speaking, essential that one of us should be in orders? I am not prepared to take them.'

'Don't you bother your head about that; I thought of that long ago. While you and Marendon, and all the others were worrying your lives out with Latin grammar, and geography, and spelling, and papa this, and mamma that,

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I was looking about me. I saw, a year ago, that this shop must close; so I went straight off to Rowlandson, and told him I thought rather seriously of taking to the Church. You should have seen the old boy brighten up; he grinned till I thought his gums would catch cold; and then he asked me, whether my new idea was a genuine one proceeding from my heart; and I said it was; and he said, he had always thought there was a really earnest man at the bottom of me, and often thanked God for it, and for placing me so near his own dear boys, and so forth; and we parted the best of friends; and he promised to read with me for my orders exam., you know, and I am going up next week, and shall be ordained before Christmas. I don't know that the old fellow was very much help in the reading, he had always something else to do when the time came; but I took a special in theology at Cambridge, and I pretty well know how to tackle an exam. without

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Rowlandson's help. So you see that little matter is all settled comfortably.'

'Well!' said Mannington, 'it is getting late, and the idea is new to me. I must become accustomed to it, and see it from many points of view. Could you come in to-morrow evening, and hear what I have to say then?'

'Oh certainly! Of course I did not expect you to jump at the idea straight off. But I know you'll come round; why, man, you've nothing else to do, and besides, I've got some boys promised already.'

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II

After Summers had gone Mannington remained sitting a long while in the easy chair by the window. Some such scheme as that which had just been suggested had not infrequently occurred to him in his hours of depression or indignation. Recently a small legacy had put into his hands a sufficient capital, wherewith to make a start; and if he had never seriously grappled with the details of such an enterprise, the reason was partly to be found in a constitutional dislike to fixed plans, which rendered him slow to commit himself; partly in a reluctance to abandon what he could not but feel to be the higher line in his profession, in favour of the more commercial side of it. And

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then there was in the present scheme an additional difficulty in the personality of Summers himself. Mannington could not say that he disliked him, or found him irritating, still less that he distrusted him, or rather had done so till this evening, when he had disclosed a fund of worldly wisdom, which Mannington and others had not suspected. After an hour or two of that almost passive rumination which a man naturally undecided dignifies by the name of 'thinking it over,' he resolved to visit Mr. Warner before meeting Summers the following day, and to be guided by the view which he took.

Mr. Warner greeted Mannington very warmly; of all the inhabitants of Muggleton he was the one, who had most benefited by the establishment of Muggleton College; he had found in Mannington an acquaintance whose mind did not run in the ordinary Muggletonian grooves, and whose conversation was a welcome change. The failure of the

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school was almost a personal grievance with him; and none the less so that the fact was wholly inexplicable. Himself a public-spirited man, he was qualified to appreciate the broad spirit in which Mannington and some others had worked; on the other hand, his personal admiration of their zeal had not blinded him to the fact that it was possible to be too zealous for Muggleton standards; and he was occasionally tempted to qualify his friend's rigidity as unpractical.

Consequently, his advice took very much this form.

There could not be a better combination than Mannington and Summers; the former would do the severer part of the work, the latter would conciliate the parents; and if, as was rumoured, he was shortly to marry Miss Theodora Beccles and also take holy orders, the prospect of success was not a doubtful one; for his own part he would certainly send his own two boys, having complete confidence in

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Mannington, while he knew that his wife was equally partial to Summers. He even thought of a house in Derbyshire, which he believed would be exactly suitable for the purpose.

'But after all,' said Mannington, 'does it not strike you that this is rather like hauling down my colours?'

'In what way?'

'Why! have I not always preached against making education a commercial business, and derided the private boarding school system?'

'Yes; and I have always wondered why you did so. Surely there is nothing dishonest or cowardly in taking the right measures to ensure good payment for good work. If other men have been dishonest in this matter, as you say they have, there is no reason why you should be so.'

Mannington returned to his rooms comforted, and, when Summers appeared in the evening, told him that he had made up his mind to join him, subject

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to the drawing up of a satisfactory business agreement between them. He also mentioned the house, and Mr. Warner's two boys.

Derbyshire sounded a very promising locality to Summers. It was far enough, and not too far, away from Muggleton, hitting the taste at once of the hard-hearted parent, who thinks that when boys go away from home they should be well away, and of the tenderer proletarian, who likes to be within reach in case of illness or accident, and perhaps to pay a visit now and again. Then according to Summers it was a *sine quâ non*, that the place in which the school was started should be associated in the maternal mind with honeymoons and summer holidays. If it were not for the question of house rent it would be well to fix on the sea-side, or some well-known inland watering place. People always liked to send their children where they had been happy themselves; and many a robust

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matron chooses a sea-side school for her son, remembering the delights of youthful paddling, and oblivious of the fact that even by the sea it is not summer all the year long.

The young men resolved to visit the house in Derbyshire.

Then Summers unfolded his list of boys promised. There were Sir John Smith's two youngest, the last hope of the Parkinsons, a Beccles or two, and even the three Podbury nephews, the most popular boys in the school; many of the others would force their parents to allow them to go to the same place; the number which had been eleven the night before had already run up to more than twenty. How had it been done?

'Well you see,' said Summers, 'of course they won't all pay full fees; one cannot expect that at first. By the way, I mentioned £120 per annum as our terms.'

'£120 per annum! Why, don't you

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know that these people have been holding indignation meetings for the last six years because the college charges them £5 per term? and I am sure some of the people on your list really cannot pay what you ask.'

'Rowlandson of course does not pay, but then I offered to take two of his boys—those two clever little ones—for practically the cost of their meat and drink. He was disposed to haggle about that; however, I soon squared him, by offering to take them for nothing, if he would secure me five others on the full fees. Then to the rich parents I offered a reduction under promise of secrecy. They will keep the secret because they don't like to be known to be mean, though they have no objection to being so, but the poorer parents all pay the full amount, to be able to say that their sons are at the same school as Sir John Smith's and so forth. Oh, it has been prime sport, I can assure you!'

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'But did none of them ask you *where* the school was going to be?'

'Yes, rather; and that 's the best of the joke. I got them to say where they would like the school, and then said that was particularly fortunate, as I was looking out for a house in that very locality. That settled the matter directly. Of course when the time comes I shall be so sorry to have failed, and so on, and so on. One cannot consider one's-self pledged to twenty different people. By the way, I also told them that I am going to be married to Miss Theodora Beccles. I forgot to mention it to you.'

Mannington made his felicitations, and then the outlines of the business agreement came under consideration.

Summers was liberal and easy in his ideas; quite fell in with Mannington's suggestion that the whole organisation of the teaching should devolve upon himself, and raised no objection to a stipulation whereby private rooms were to be set

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apart for Mannington, who was to be at liberty to take his meals in solitude if he pleased.

Moral supervision, the games, domestic arrangements were to be in the hands of Summers, and the prospective Mrs. Summers.

An early date was fixed for a visit to Derbyshire, and the pair separated. Summers went home by the Beccleses' to communicate the success of his interview. As soon as he was gone Mannington felt less certain of liking the prospect.

'What,' reflected he, 'what will happen if I fall out with Theodora?' And the stately presentment of that young lady's well-developed charms rose awfully before his soberer imagination.

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III

THE house in Derbyshire proved everything that could be desired—in the opinion of Mr. Summers. Surrounded by grass fields, on the slope of a hill, limestone soil, climate bracing in summer, warm in winter, excellent supply of water, and a large establishment of outhouses built by a previous tenant, who fancied dogs, it at once charmed the eye and appealed to the reason. A large and well-built barn in the back premises would make an excellent gymnasium; a somewhat elaborate coach-house could well be turned into a chapel, and as the greater part of the stables would be superfluous, they could be used for workshops. A freely running spring, much

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vaunted in the neighbourhood, as only failing once in a hundred years, promised facilities for a swimming bath; while the interior of the house readily lent itself to every purpose of a school and dwelling house except class rooms. Mannington pointed this out as constituting a serious objection.

'Not at all,' said Summers, 'we can rub along, you know, till we can afford to build.'

But it seemed to Mannington that they could better afford to do without a gymnasium, for a while, or even a chapel, seeing that the parish church was within a mile of the house.

'I see you do not understand the first elements of school-keeping,' said Summers; why, look at Uppingham till a few years ago! You leave all those matters to me, and I will undertake that things will go quite right.'

Mannington had by this gone too far to recede. His partner's easy confidence paralysed him, and he began to have a

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sense of having been a helpless fool all his life. Indeed, the vigour with which Summers beat up boys, persuaded parents, secured testimonials from bishops, worked the educational agencies, advertised, replied to advertisements, showed that there was little reason to fear the consequences of joining fortunes with him.

'And now,' said he one day to Mannington, bursting into his rooms without knocking, 'and now comes the delicate question of appointing our most important functionary.'

'You mean our first assistant, I presume!'

'Goodness me, no! That can be done in half an hour at any time; there are always several thousand of those gentry looking out for work. What I want is a widow woman with nursing experience in a hospital; childless, but who has had children; a lady who has had misfortunes, but who won't want to sit in the drawing-room, or marry you.'

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'And she is to be——?'

'Matron, of course!'

'Matron! Why, I thought the future Mrs. Summers was to undertake that part of the work!'

'Oh well, you see, to begin with, Theodora says that she is not marrying to turn nursemaid to a pack of dirty little boys; and between you and me, her mother doses her with educational fads, ragged schools, and Sunday schools, to that extent that it is hardly surprising she should look forward to a holiday. Then again, it is to be hoped that before long she may have children of her own to attend to, who will take up all her time; and in short it will look very much better in the prospectus to say that "the health of the boys is under the personal supervision of Mrs. Summers, assisted by a skilled matron, a widow lady, who has had a long experience in the management of children's hospitals."'

'But why a widow woman?'

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'Well, you see, all married women distrust a woman who has never had children; a spinster never knows exactly how to touch their soft places; whereas a woman who has had children herself understands precisely how to flatter them most effectively; there's a sort of instinctive freemasonry between all mothers. Do you know any one of the kind?'

A few days later Summers came in triumphantly, bearing a letter from such a person as he had described. 'Now we are safe!' said he.

By the end of July Summers brought the proofs of the prospectus for Mannington's approval.

'ST. THEOBALDS SCHOOL,
'WARBLEYDALE, DERBYSHIRE.

'Principals: the Reverend H.F.St. John Summers, M.A., and W. Vaux-Mannington, M.A., D. Litt., F.R.C.P., M.T.G., etc. etc., assisted by Graduates of Oxford and Cambridge.

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'The school is situated *healthily* in one of the most salubrious localities in Derbyshire. From the windows may be obtained a beautiful view of the romantic windings of the Warble in its delightful dale. The neighbourhood abounds in mineral springs, whose health-giving properties are of world-wide repute. The house is surrounded by grassy slopes, on which are pastured the herd of cows who exclusively supply milk to the scholars.

'In order further to avoid any risk of infection, and of the introduction to the school of those ailments wrongly supposed to be necessary to the period of youth, the school is provided with its own laundry. A medical man calls once a day and inspects all the scholars.

'For boys of weakly growth, uncertain appetite; for those liable to headaches; for those who catch cold readily, or are suspected of a tendency to pulmonary affections, the air of Warbleydale has long been recommended by the faculty.

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'Mrs. Summers is assisted in her supervision of the comforts of the boys by Mrs. Grierson-Fane (widow of one who fell gloriously in the service of his country), for a long while superintendent of the Children's Hospital at Saltcombe.

'Each boy has a separate sleeping compartment. The diet is liberal; the meals frequent, but not excessive in quantity.

'The boys will be at liberty, as there are no dangerous cliffs within several miles of St. Theobalds, to range the country during their play hours, and will be encouraged to form collections of the numerous and interesting curiosities, animal, vegetable, *and mineral*, in which the neighbourhood is well known to abound. For those who prefer it, ample football and cricket fields are provided, but no boy will be forced to take part in these games against the wish of his parents or himself.

'The school has a gymnasium and

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workshops. A swimming bath in the open air will shortly be provided by a naturally tepid spring, which rises near the house.

'In order that the religious instruction may be such only as is profitable to young boys, the principals have fitted up a private chapel in which the Rev. H. F. St. John Summers will officiate, occasionally assisted by the Venerable Archdeacon Powlett, rector of the parish of St. Theobalds.

'No boys will be required to learn classical languages except those destined for the public schools. French, German, and Italian will be taught by visiting professors.

'Special attention is given to book-keeping, short-hand, and chemistry. All boys may learn the piano.

'Medical advice is taken on the arrival of each boy, to ascertain his precise capacity for work, and a routine drawn up with the approval of a skilled medical practitioner suitable to the individual. It is

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thus hoped that *overwork*, that bane of modern life, may be *avoided*.

'References are permitted to the following' (follows a reasonable percentage of the Peerage and Clergy list, and the Bench of Bishops).

'There!' said Summers triumphantly, 'I think that will fetch them! Oh—I see—I have forgotten one or two things. "Terms one hundred and twenty guineas per annum, or forty guineas per term—payable weekly if desired."

'"N.B. The Principals do not wish to insist upon the term's notice, so commonly demanded before the withdrawal of a pupil, as they are convinced that no pupil will wish to leave them except on conditions which will have their full approbation." Yes that will do—Oh yes, and—"Telephonic communication is maintained between St. Theobalds and the eminent Dr. Blankledge of Liverpool."'

'Why do you call yourself "St. John"?

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I was not aware that was your Christian name.'

'My mother's name was St. John—it looks well in print—and what 's the good of a mother if you can't use her name? By the way, you will observe that I have hyphened your *Vaux*. You can tell your relatives that it is a printer's error.'

'I submit,' said Mannington, 'to that, as to all your other arrangements; it is hopeless to struggle with a superior genius.'

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IV

St. Theobalds School, Warbleydale, opened with forty pupils the September after the closing of Muggleton College.

Such a goodly array of boys to start with placed the future success of the establishment beyond a doubt in the opinion of the enterprising Mr. Summers, who was encouraged forthwith to consult an architect on the subject of converting some disused cowhouses into class-rooms. That Mr. Summers should have been hasty in this matter was all the more meritorious, that his time was spent chiefly out of doors, inspecting the dairy, the laundry, the water supply, sniffing the drains; or else making descents upon persons at a distance blessed with male children, to

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whom he secured introductions by methods alike daring and ingenious. Not infrequently, after swooping down upon a nes in this way, he returned in triumph to St. Theobalds, bearing a callow nestling with him. On such occasions he was wont to vaunt the motherly attentions of Theodora, whom the boys never saw except at evening prayers.

None of the victims, however, gave him so much satisfaction, as his capture of the three Podbury nephews, almost as soon as he had decided upon a school. It happened on this wise.

Summers was in the habit of turning into the genial Podbury's of an evening to play billiards, and discuss things in general. Two days before he approached Mannington on the question of a partnership, he had betaken himself on this agreeable errand to Podfield House.

No sooner was the door opened than sounds of vehement swearing, shrieks of terror, and again of laughter assailed his

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ears. Disregarding the timid efforts of the trim waiting-maid to lead him into one of the state apartments, he turned down the passage to the billiard room, whence the noise proceeded, and came upon Uncle Pod pursuing his nephews round the billiard-table with a hunting crop. There was some reason for his excitement.

The previous day had been wet, and the young Podburys in search of amusement had invented a new game of cricket, which they played on the billiard table; the fire shovel made an excellent bat, three cues standing up on end, a no less excellent wicket, while crease and popping-crease, and various boundaries had all been liberally marked out with chalk; the batsman stood at the side of the table and mowed valiantly with the fireshovel at billiard balls hurled by the bowler. It was excellent fun, but the cloth suffered, and the balls were chipped.

'Here, stop that little rascal, you Summers!' roared Uncle Pod, as his

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youngest nephew strove to dash through the open door past the visitor. The execution that followed was brief but effective. It did not, however, serve to appreciably mitigate the wrath of Podbury, who vowed and declared that each of the nephews did more than a hundred pounds' worth of damage in the course of the year.

'It would be cheaper to send them away to school!' observed Summers; and instantly the idea of annexing the whole family suggested itself.

After some haggling, Podbury covenanted to be rid of his nephews on condition that twenty-five per cent. of the fees should be remitted on consideration of 'taking the lot'; while he was to be permitted to leave them at school during the holidays on payment of a small extra boarding fee.

The Podburys were excellent youths; all three were good cricketers, and two of them secured entrance scholarships at

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Marlborough; and they proved admirable recruiting sergeants in Muggleton.

In after days, when Summers had retired from St. Theobalds, and become an archdeacon, he used to rub his hands at the mention of the name of Podbury, and declare that that game of cricket on the billiard table was the foundation of his fortunes.

It is superfluous to say that the success of St. Theobalds was phenomenal. All boys wrote letters home once a week, which were passed under the inspection of the writing-master previously to being posted; the school had its magazine, chiefly written by Mannington; its speech day; its own confirmation in the parish church; its cricketing colours, the school arms, being the instruments of the martyrdom of St. Theobald; and all the boys wore Eton jackets, tall hats, and gloves on Sunday. Paper-chases were called by another name, and the word 'compulsory' was never used in connection with games,

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in which all joined. Mannington was an excellent teacher, and 'scholastic successes' in plenty rewarded his efforts for the first five years of the school's existence. They were well advertised by his colleague.

Mannington, however, was not destined to share the good fortune of the school for long; as Summers's family increased, Mrs. Summers began to pay some attention to the financing of the school, with the result that she one day observed to her husband, 'I think we could do without Mr. Mannington.' The idea had long been floating in the mind of Summers, but he had not ventured to put it into words; now he felt at liberty to cast up and calculate. There really seemed to be no reason to pay Mannington a large percentage on the profits for work which could be much more cheaply done by a youth fresh from the university, whose more recent distinctions would look better in the prospectus; and even if the work

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were not so well done, the reputation of the school was made, and would last as long as its present owners wanted. The original agreement was overhauled, found to be faulty; the defect was pointed out to Mannington, who at once withdrew, and now edits a socialistic newspaper in the East End of London.

Meanwhile Muggleton congratulates itself on the brilliant success of St. Theobalds School. It is generally felt there, that to Muggleton brains, and Muggleton money, are due the archidiaconal gaiters of Summers, and the diamonds of Theodora.

The young Podburys and Rowlandsons, now the ornaments of the Bar and the Church, attribute all their success to St. Theobalds; and many a Muggleton mother blesses the day on which she sent her son away to Warbleydale. 'So different from that horrid school they tried to start in the town!'

One day when the Rev. James Podbury,

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